T H E F U R T H E R

by
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The universe is deathless;
Is deathless because, having no finite self,
it stays infinite.
A sound man by not advancing himself stays the further ahead of himself,
By not confining himself to himself,
sustains himself outside himself.

--Laozi

FADE IN

INT. DARKENED BEDROOM - NIGHT

A spherical black monolith rises up from a white surface... white like the moon.

In the darkness, the towers metal skin is barely visible.

We ROTATE AROUND, revealing the tower to actually be a LAMP -- not rising up from a surface, but *hanging down* from a white ceiling. The bulb unlit.

Directly below the lamp is the very definition of innocence - a sleeping child. Chest rising and falling with each breath.

We HOVER over the young boy...watching him. A blanket emblazoned with dinosaurs is draped across his limbs. His mouth is slack, eyelids twitching to dreams unseen.

The truly deep sleep that an adult can only wish for.

We move away from him, exploring the dark room. Strewn with toys. The door is slightly ajar. We float through it into--

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

--a long hallway. Even darker than the bedroom. And without the boys rhythmic breathing, even quieter.

A window at the end of the hall enlarges as we approach.

Someone is standing in front of it.

The murky silhouette of the figure turns and walks away. We follow it, tentative. Turning a corner, we see the figure. Standing in a doorway.

Now we can make out the edges of the person. It is an old woman. Hair in a Victorian bun. A corseted dress.

She stares at us.

WOMAN
Let me in.

CUT TO:

OPENING TITLES play out to the shrill screams of George Crumb’s ‘Black Angels I: Night Of The Electric Insects’.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eyes flick open.

A woman blinks awake, gazing around the room. Another bedroom. Sparse. Just a bed and a cabinet. It is 5.43 AM.

Her eyes settle on the man lying next to her in the dark. His heaving snores have woken her up.

She is RENAI (pronounced Renee) LAMBERT (36). With a quiet determination she is holding on to her youthful good looks, but the lines of age are creeping in.

She has settled into the 'comfort' years of a marriage: hair pinned up messily, wearing dowdy pajamas.

She beholds her husband, taking him in. Considering him. He snorts and smacks his lips. Very unflattering.

She climbs out of bed.

INT. LIVING ROOM, LAMBERT HOME - NIGHT

High ceilings. Exposed beams. Spanish style windows.

Renai treads across wooden floorboards into a sunken living room. No matter careful she is, there is a loud creak with each step. A GRANDFATHER CLOCK in the corner *ticks* steadily.

There is barely any furniture in here, only a BOOKCASE and a PIANO. What there *is* a lot of...is boxes. Large moving boxes.

Renai plops cross-legged onto the floor and rips open one of the boxes, marked BOOKS. She plucks out a handful of books and lines them up on the bookshelf. Then another handful.

They are all self-help and self-improvement books. Titles like '*Be The Better You*' and '*Inch By Inch, It's A Cinch: A Guide To Achieving Your Goals*' pop out.

She spots a sealed box labelled PHOTO ALBUMS. She strips away the tape and wrestles out a dusty album of wedding photos.

Smiling faces greet her as she thumbs through the pages. The happy couple. Young. *Glowing*. Sadness washes over her.

VOICE (O.S.)
Mom?

She snaps out of it and turns to see DALTON LAMBERT (8). Her son. He approaches her, rubbing his eyes. (It is not the boy we saw in the opening scene.)

RENAI
What are you doing up, kiddo?

DALTON
I don't like my room.

RENAI
You'll get used to it. It's only your first night.

He climbs into her lap. She bites on his ear playfully.

RENAI (CONT'D)
Argh, I'm going to eat you.

DALTON
What are you looking at?

RENAI
Just some photos.

DALTON
What photos?

She hefts another album from the box, prying it open. A photo of a grinning young girl greets them, hair in pigtails.

RENAI
Do you know who that is?

DALTON
No.

RENAI
That's me.

DALTON
It doesn't look like you.

RENAI
I know. I'm so happy there. But it's me. When I was your age. I was a kid once too, you know.

DALTON
No, you weren't.

Renai bursts out laughing. She is famous for her big laugh.

RENAI
Thanks. Maybe you're right...I don't remember being this person at all. I hope she smiled like that all the time, whoever she was.

She sizes up her son. The living embodiment of the photo.

RENAI (CONT'D)
This is a terrible thing to admit, Dalton, but sometimes I get jealous of you. That you're so young. That you haven't made any of your decisions yet.

DALTON
I don't wanna grow old.

RENAI
Well, it starts happening to us from the moment we're born.

She points to the hands on the grandfather clock.

RENAI (CONT'D)
Every time that clock ticks, we all get a little bit older.

She turns the page in the photo album, seeing an old man.

RENAI (CONT'D)
That's your grandpa. You wouldn't remember him.

DALTON
He smells like smoke.

RENAI
Yeah...good memory. He did smoke that god awful pipe, didn't he?

DALTON
Show me a picture of dad when he was a little kid.

RENAI
I don't even know if we have any. He's hopeless with keeping photos.

DALTON
Show me a picture of me when I was a little kid.

RENAI
Your pictures are all in the computer. Nobody keeps photo albums like this anymore, they're ancient relics. They should. I like being able to touch something, instead of it floating around in cyber world. If the laptop breaks, your whole existence is erased.

DALTON
What was I like when I was a little kid?

RENAI
You *are* a little kid.

She kisses him on the forehead and stares into his eyes.

RENAI (CONT'D)
If only you knew what I know.

We hear a baby crying off screen.

RENAI (CONT'D)
You certainly didn't cry as much as your little sister does. Come on.

INT. KITCHEN, LAMBERT HOME - MORNING

Chaos.

Boxes of dinnerware have not been unpacked yet and it is turning the usual morning routine into a nightmare.

Renai is on the phone as her kids buzz around a kitchen island at top speed, creating a high-energy, manic pace in the room.

RENAI
(into phone)
Billing department.

Her son FOSTER (6), tugs on her leg, holding a box of cereal.

FOSTER
I need a bowl, mom.

Renai rips open a box, rifling through newspaper, phone wedged against her shoulder. She holds out a cup, flustered.

RENAI
Billing department.

FOSTER
It's too small.

RENAI
Make it work.
(into phone)
Speak to an agent. Speak to an agent. Speak to an agent.

Foster slumps on the floor, pouring cereal and overflowing milk into the cup. A baby girl in a high chair, CALI (2), squeals.

INT. BATHROOM, LAMBERT HOME - MORNING

JOSH LAMBERT (37) gapes into the mirror, face covered in soap.

He washes it off. Now he's awake we see that he is a handsome, clean-cut guy - a former high school nerd who got revenge by growing into his body.

He sorts through a box labelled JOSH'S BATHROOM STUFF.

He takes out two bottles - TONER and MOISTURIZER. He dabs the toner on, then smooths the moisturizer into his forehead and around his eyes.

He suddenly notices a grey hair. Looks mortified.

JOSH
(Michael Corleone voice)
Every time I think I've pulled you out...you grow back in.

He plucks it out, wincing melodramatically.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Ouch!

INT. KITCHEN, LAMBERT HOME - MORNING

Josh strides in, tie hanging open around his neck. Renai is still on the phone. Josh points to his tie.

RENAI
Well, I'd like to keep the old number if I could.
(to Josh)
You really need to learn how to do this, honey.

She threads the tie into a knot for him.

JOSH
(to Foster)
Don't eat on the floor, buddy.

Foster stays where he is, slurping cereal from the cup. Dalton is playing a handheld videogame. Intensely focused.

RENAI
(into phone)
Okay, well, please let me know by the end of today, I have to give the number out. Thank you.

She hangs up, pissed.

RENAI (CONT'D)
Foster, get up. Now.

Foster frowns and obeys.

JOSH
(to Renai)
How come you were up so early? Was Cali crying?

RENAI
You woke me up.

JOSH
What do you mean?

RENAI
You were snoring.

JOSH
No I wasn't.

RENAI
Yes you were.

JOSH
I don't snore.

RENAI
Yes you do.

JOSH
My father snored. I do not snore.

RENAI
How would you know what you do? You're asleep.

Renai marches out of the room. Dalton's game unit beeps loudly and he pumps his fist.

DALTON
Yes! I made it to the last level! Invisiworld!

Ever amiable, Josh high five's his son.

JOSH
Good one, champ.
(beat)
I don't snore, do I?

INT. LIVING ROOM, LAMBERT HOME - CONTINUOUS

Renai sees that all the books she unpacked earlier are now scattered across the floor of the living room.

RENAI
Where are my bleeping pills?

INT. KITCHEN, LAMBERT HOME - CONTINUOUS

Renai charges in. Josh snatches an apple out of a fruit bowl, biting into it. He quickly gags and spits it out into the sink.

JOSH
What the heck is this? Wax?!

RENAI
Yes.

JOSH
Let me get this straight - we have no actual fruit but we have wax fruit?

RENAI
Yes.

JOSH
That is dangerous. It could kill one of our kids.

RENAI
Where are my pills, Josh?

JOSH
Probably where you left them, Renai.

She finds them on the counter, snatching them up.

JOSH (CONT'D)
See.

RENAI
That's not where I left them.

DALTON
Mom, I need my lunch.

RENAI
Oh, geez. Look, just...take last night's dinner.

She opens the fridge. It is bare except for a box of sushi.

DALTON
Sushi? Aw, that's weirdo food.

RENAI
It's all we have. Just for today, honey.

JOSH
Check it first, Dalton. It's probably made out of Styrofoam.

RENAI
(to Dalton)
And while I've got you, if you're going to look at my books, please don't leave them all over the floor.

DALTON
I didn't touch your books.

Josh streaks past, kissing Renai on the cheek.

JOSH
I gotta go.

RENAI
Are you taking the boys to school?

JOSH
No time.

RENAI
Well can you pick them up after school?

JOSH
Not today.

RENAI
But I have stuff I wanted to...

She trails off. He's gone. Foster BURPS. Loudly.

FOSTER
Can I have another cup, mom?

INT. CLASSROOM, FORRESTER HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Noisy students settle into their desks. Inner city kids, mostly Hispanic.

Josh is their teacher, scribbling on the blackboard. One student, a lanky boy, ALANSO (16), hovers near the door.

JOSH
Alanso, please sit down.

ALANSO
No entiendo.

JOSH
Siéntate, por favor.

Alanso takes a seat. Josh is having trouble getting control.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Come on guys, quieten down.

A pretty girl in the front, TERI, is annoyed at the class.

TERI
You better all shut up.

She commands respect. They do. Except for one kid.

THE ONE KID
Just cos you're in love.

JOSH
Thank you, Teri. Today we are going to talk about Darwin. It's a city in Australia, but it's also the last name of which famous naturalist?

MALE STUDENT # 1
Charles Darwin.

JOSH
Correct. Does anybody know what he is famous for?

MALE STUDENT # 1
He said that people descended from monkeys.

JOSH
Half right. He wrote a seminal book that explained his theories on natural selection, and how the different species on this planet - including humans - evolved.

ALANSO
I know *I* didn't evolve from no monkey. Shit.

Everyone laughs.

JOSH
Humans actually have a lot in common with monkeys, or more specifically, chimpanzees.

ALANSO
Maybe you do, but I was created in the image of my *Dios*.

He takes a gold cross hanging on a necklace out of his shirt, kissing it and holding it up. That gets another laugh.

JOSH
I respect your right to believe that, Alanso. But I want to give you all possible theories. I want this class to go out into the world with an informed opinion.

ALANSO
The theory is incorrect, Mr. Lambert.

JOSH
How can it be incorrect? It's a theory. A scientific theory.

ALANSO
Yeah, well, science is bullshit. We didn't get here cos of no test-tubes.

JOSH
Alanso, if you keep talking like that I'm going to ask you to visit the principal.

ALANSO
Fine.

He gets up and leaves as the class JEERS and BOOS.

INT. LIVING ROOM, LAMBERT HOME - DAY

Peace and quiet at last.

Renai gropes in behind the bookcase, plucking a hidden jewelry box free. She pinches a cigarette out of it and lights it.

She sits down at her piano, feeling the keys, warming her fingers up. Sunlight streams in through the windows.

She takes out a notebook, filled with scribbled handwriting.

She places the notebook on the sheetstand, then sets a small, mechanical METRONOME in motion and begins tapping out a sombre melody in time with it.

RENAI
(singing)
Yeah, I'm looking west, always been looking that way, gonna get it all happening, just can't do it today...

She stops and makes a note in her book. She starts over, rising to the emotion of the song. She's got a good voice.

RENAI (CONT'D)
(singing)
Yeah, I'm looking west, always been looking that way, I'm gonna be somebody, I just can't be her today--

She is interrupted by the tinny sound of a baby crying.

She stops playing and looks over at a baby monitor, the source of the noise.

Renai deflates, her shoulders sagging in defeat. She closes her notebook and leaves the room.

INT. CALI'S NURSERY - DAY

Renai scoops up Cali, rocking her gently.

A *scratching* sound interrupts. Rough. Frantic. Like a dog pawing at something.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Renai steps into the hall, curious. She can still hear it. She follows the sound to a door. Grabs the door handle.

The sound abruptly ceases.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

The door whines open and stabs a blade of light onto a set of stairs that descend into a gloomy basement.

Renai stands at the top of the stairs, squinting into the inky blackness, straining to see.

She reaches up and yanks a light chain, illuminating a bare bulb and throwing light across the tenebrous space.

The basement is large and completely bare. Cleaned out.

Renai takes a step down. She is *still carrying Cali*.

FURTHER DOWN below her, we see that there is one step that is cracked and broken.

She takes another step. *The broken step is right below her now*.

One more step and she will fall.

Cali squeals happily. Renai pauses...then turns around, heading back up the stairs. Stops when she sees something.

DEEP, VIOLENT SCRATCH MARKS...running downwards on the inside of the door...as if someone were trying to claw their way out.

EXT. LAMBERT HOME - NIGHT

A Spanish-style home. Very pretty. This is not the suburbs. More of an inner city neighborhood. There's history here.

Josh pulls into the driveway of his new house in his Subaru.

INT. LIVING ROOM, LAMBERT HOME - NIGHT

The house almost looks liveable.

Foster is watching loud, zany cartoons on TV. Cali is in a high chair. Renai is folding boxes. She has unpacked most of the living room and is very tired.

Josh ambles in, sees the work Renai has done.

JOSH
Look at this. Nice job.

Foster bolts over and crashes into his dads legs, hugging him.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Whoa, buddy. Slow down.

RENAI
Josh, where's the box of my lamps?

JOSH
I don't know. They should be here.
We packed them up.

RENAI
Yeah, I packed them. They're not here.

JOSH
I remember the movers bringing them in and putting them right there.

RENAI
(passive aggressive)
Well, they're not here. I would know, I've been unpacking this stuff all day.

INT. CORRIDOR, LAMBERT HOME - NIGHT

Dalton wanders the hall, sporting a red superhero CAPE and carrying a plastic, glowing light-sabre toy.

He reaches a door. The basement door. He pulls it open.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Dalton holds up his light-sabre, the glow allowing him to make out the murky corners of the basement below.

He takes a step down the stairs. Then another step.

The broken step is right below him.

He steps again --

-- and *falls*. Flails forward, tumbling down the steps, all the way to the bottom. His light sabre SHATTERS.

He hits the ground, his head smacking the floor.

All is dark.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Josh sits with Foster, zoned out in front of the droning TV.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Pitch black.

Dazed, Dalton sits up. His head is cut and bleeding. He is alone in the dark. He stares into the corner of the surrounding cell.

His eyes adjust, making out a shape.

A shadow.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Josh and Renai look up as the quiet is shattered by a SCREAM.

They spring into action, scrambling to their feet.

RENAI
Dalton? Where are you?

He doesn't answer. Just keeps screaming.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Renai and Josh whip the door open, glaring into the basement from the top of the stairs.

RENAI
Dalton?

Dalton is crumpled at the bottom of the steps, sobbing, his red cape gathered around him.

Renai flicks the light on. Her and Josh scamper down the steps, propping Dalton up.

JOSH
What happened?

DALTON
I fell.

RENAI
Dalton, you have to be careful. You shouldn't be coming down here in the dark.

JOSH
Where do you hurt the most?

DALTON
My knee and my head. I can't stand up.

Josh lifts him to his feet. A severely grazed knee is dotted with blood. He's okay.

JOSH
You scared us, champ.

Josh carries him up the stairs as he sucks in sobs.

Renai glances around the basement, her eyes landing on the lone object that resides in it.

She frowns. It wasn't there when she saw the basement last.

It is a box. One of her large, cardboard moving boxes.

It is marked LAMPS.

INT. DALTON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dalton is lying in bed, a band-aid slapped across his forehead. Renai tucks him in, Josh standing over him.

JOSH
You're lucky you don't need stitches.

RENAI
If I catch you falling down the stairs again I'm gonna break your neck.

DALTON
That doesn't make sense.

There are dozens of pictures tacked to the wall, all drawn by Dalton. Josh taps one; a drawing of Dalton flying through the night sky, wearing his cape.

DALTON (CONT'D)
You might be a superhero but you're not invincible. Be more careful, bud.

Renai kisses him and gets up.

RENAI
Sleep tight, honey.

They wave goodbye and turn out the light.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Renai flops into bed beside Josh, exhausted.

JOSH
We've gotta lock that door.

RENAI
He's such a boy. He goes off exploring. Sometimes I wanna keep him on one of those child leashes.

JOSH
Why bother with a child leash? I'll stop at the pet store tomorrow.

She laughs and cuddles up to him, resting her head on his chest.

RENAI
I'm sorry I was pissy when you got home. I was trying to work on a song today and then Cali woke up and wouldn't stop crying...

JOSH
I didn't even notice.

RENAI
I feel guilty for wanting my own time.

JOSH
It's normal to want your own time.

RENAI
Is it? My mother gave up everything for me. I keep waiting for the completely selfless parent gene to kick in, but I'm exactly the same person I was when I was 22, only now I'm married with kids.

JOSH
You're a great mother.

RENAI
No, I'm not. They like you so much better than me.

JOSH
That's not true.

RENAI
You're the cool dad who comes home with presents and I'm the one who yells at them all day.

JOSH
Now you're being crazy. They love you. At least you get to connect with them. I work so much.

RENAI
Believe me, you're their hero. They try to play us off against each other. They're master manipulators. I guess they really are my kids.

Josh laughs. A lull settles over them.

RENAI (CONT'D)
Is this it, Josh?

JOSH
Is this so bad?

She doesn't answer. They sit in silence for a long beat.

RENAI
Thank you for letting me take some time off to work on my music again.

JOSH
We'll get by. I want you to do it.

RENAI
There's a couple of songs...I mean not all of them, but there's a couple of them that I think are really good. And I think, maybe I could do something with them.

JOSH
I love all your songs.

They kiss.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It is 3AM. All the remoteness of that hour is present here...we can feel it.

As still and quiet as deep space.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The formerly bustling kitchen is now a museum at midnight.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

A long, dark thoroughfare. A ticking clock its only occupant.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

Stairs swallowed up by darkness. The groan of settling wood.

INT. FOSTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The soft breathing of a sleeping child.

INT. CALI'S NURSERY - NIGHT

Hanging toy birds dangle over the baby, tinkling in a breeze.

INT. DALTON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dalton is sleeping too. Impossibly still. Lying on his back.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Renai and Josh are entwined together. Josh is snoring. They are both blissfully asleep...

...for now.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Another day, another chaotic breakfast.

Foster waves a stuffed toy around. Josh charges in, bits of tissue on his face from shaving cuts. Cali flails her arms in her high chair. Renai is at the sink, whisking eggs.

RENAI
Foster, sit down honey.

She whips a look around.

RENAI (CONT'D)
Where is...? Hey Josh, could you go wake up Dalton?

We FOLLOW Josh as he marches down the corridor to Dalton's bedroom, poking his head inside.

INT. DALTON'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Josh knocks on the wall.

JOSH
Time to get up, my man. Come on.

Nothing from Dalton. He doesn't even stir. Josh rolls his eyes and walks in. Nudges Dalton with his knee.

JOSH (CONT'D)
You're making me look bad here. Outta bed before your mother comes in and kills both of us.

Nothing. He's really out.

Josh reaches down and shakes Dalton vigorously.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Dalton, get up. You've gotta get ready for school.

Josh waits for a response, but none comes. Dalton is as slack as a puppet. Something resembling concern crosses Josh's face.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Dalton...?

He kneels down, shaking Dalton hard. He listens for breathing.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Dalton? Dalton?! DALTON!!

His scream takes us into--

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM, ICU UNIT - DAY

--the stern sterility of a hospital.

Josh and Renai, eyes lined by dark circles, stand in front of a dour neurologist, DR. JOEL SERCARZ (46).

Renai dabs her eyes with a tissue. They are red with tears. Beyond a window in front of them, lying on a gurney in an ICU chamber, is the unconscious body of Dalton.

DR. SERCARZ
Okay...as of yet, our tests have not drawn any conclusive answers for you. Repeated blood and CSF cultures are normal, making an infective origin highly unlikely. Tests for Lyme disease and repeated polymerase chain reaction are negative. Systemic vasculitis was ruled out. Dalton remains in an areactive coma without focal signs or abnormal brainstem reflexes.

Josh and Renai struggle to follow the cold, multi-syllable medical terminology...like stranded tourists keeping up with a foreign language.

DR. SERCARZ (CONT'D)
We've looked for bacterial pathogens like Meningoencephalitis, but haven't seen anything.
(MORE)

DR. SERCARZ (CONT'D)
I wouldn't say we've exhausted every single angle...but we're close. The underlying cause is still unknown.

Josh and Renai look in at their boy.

DR. SERCARZ (CONT'D)
The good news is that he's breathing without the use of a mechanical apparatus, and there are no lesions or hemorrhages in any of the CT scans.

JOSH
So...there's no brain damage or...?

DR. SERCARZ
None that we've detected. Technically, he's in a coma. He doesn't respond to stimuli, he has no sleep-wake cycle, but there's no brain trauma or infection. His scans are normal. To be honest, I've never seen anything like it.

JOSH
That fall he took...I mean, it looked like he hit his head pretty hard.

DR. SERCARZ
We definitely exhausted that possibility, but it was always doubtful. The cut was superficial, there wasn't even a skull fracture.

RENAI
He can't just *not* wake up...there's got to be *something*...

Renai sobs, tears streaming down her face. Josh looks like a deer in the headlights. Stunned dumb.

Sercarz clears his throat. This part of the job isn't his specialty.

DR. SERCARZ
I'm sorry.

JOSH
So what do we do now? Does he stay here?

DR. SERCARZ
We'll conduct some further testing, but beyond that...I really don't know.

His pager goes off. He checks it.

DR. SERCARZ (CONT'D)
Excuse me for a minute. I have to step out. A nurse will be with you in just a moment.

He leaves quickly. Josh and Renai press on the glass, separated in body and spirit from their son.

FADE TO BLACK.

SUPERIMPOSE TITLE: TWO MONTHS LATER

INT. DALTON'S BEDROOM, LAMBERT HOME - DAY

A ghastly meld of hospital room and young boys bedroom.

Dalton lies on his bed, a heart rate monitor hooked to his chest. IV tubes run into his arms, a Nasogastric feeding tube into his mouth.

A young nurse, ADELE CHALFIN (30), checks the various tubes as Renai watches on.

ADELE
Are you having any more trouble with the feeding tube?

Renai looks broken, the life drained from her. A wilted flower. She shakes her head, her voice a low rasp.

RENAI
(barely audible)
It's okay.

ADELE
Alright, well I'll be back soon. I'll bring some new books. You're probably sick of the ones you have.

RENAI
Did he respond to any of the tests?

Adele pauses.

ADELE
No...no, he didn't. But we have to give it time. I've seen coma patients with a much longer inactivity time suddenly start making noises.

RENAI
He’s not in a coma, remember? They don’t know what to call it. They don’t know what to do with him so they’ve given up.

ADELE
No, they haven’t. We’re going to figure it out.

Adele hugs her, then exits. Renai slumps down on a chair next to her son.

The heart rate monitor pings. Dalton is as still as a statue.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Renai shuffles down the corridor. She passes a bedroom door, then stops and doubles back, pushing it open and going into--

INT. CALI’S NURSERY - CONTINUOUS

--the babies room.

She stares into the crib...at her other sleeping baby. She sets the baby monitor and walks out softly.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Renai slumps in front of her piano. Taps one of the keys.

She plays a discordant melody of low notes with one hand, not present enough to hear it.

She stops and buries her face in her hands.

Then she hears it. *Whispering*.

It’s so low you would miss it if the house wasn’t absolutely silent. Renai looks up, scanning for the source of the murmur.

<u>It is coming from the baby monitor</u>.

Confused, Renai picks up the monitor, turning up the volume all the way up. The *hisssssssss* of static fills the room.

She presses her ear to the device, then hears it again - a hushed WHISPER, almost indistinct from the static save for the whistle of sibilants.

VOICE
(from monitor)
They see us...all of us...we have to be quick...this life begs us to come back.

The whisper trails off....more static...

VOICE (CONT'D)
(from monitor)
NOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!

Renai drops the baby monitor, leaping out of her skin at the sound of the scream. Nerves fried.

The monitor smashes on the floor. All is quiet.

Renai moves to the door, staring down the corridor at the door to Cali's nursery.

It is open only a crack. She hears crying. Cali is crying.

We follow her as she bolts towards the nursery, smashing through the door, eyes filled with terror, seeing--

--nothing.

INT. NURSERY - CONTINUOUS

Renai stalks into the room.

The room is empty, save for Cali, crying in her crib. Renai's eyes land on the closet.

ANGLE FROM INSIDE THE CLOSET

Through a slight crack, we see Renai approach. Breath quivering. Her hand reaches out. She FLINGS the door open.

It is empty.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The family is eating. It's very quiet.

Foster keeps his eyes down as his parents eat in silence. Suddenly Cali breaks the quiet, squealing happily.

CALI
Dadda!

Josh looks up, smiling. Amazed.

JOSH
She said dad...

Neither Renai nor Foster even look up.

INT. FOSTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A bedside lamp gives off a jaundice glow.

Renai gathers up scattered toys from the floor, relocating them to a desktop covered in beakers and lab equipment.

Foster lies in bed beneath a large chart of the solar system.

Renai stops cleaning when she finds a certificate, crumpled next to a school bag. It says IN RECOGNITION OF SCIENCE SKILL, AWARDED TO FOSTER LAMBERT ON 3/14/10.

RENAI
What's this?

FOSTER
An award.

RENAI
That's today's date. You got this today?

Foster nods meekly.

RENAI (CONT'D)
Why didn't you tell us, honey?

She sits on the edge of his bed. He stares at the wall. She strokes his hair.

RENAI (CONT'D)
I know it's hard right now. But things will get better. I promise.

Foster nods.

RENAI (CONT'D)
I'm going to show this to your dad.

She plants a kiss his forehead and stands up.

FOSTER
I'm scared, mom.

RENAI
Scared of what?

FOSTER
Dalton.

Renai sits back down.

RENAI
We're all scared. It's normal to be scared for him. But we can't give up--

FOSTER
Why do I have to sleep so close to him? Can't I change rooms?

RENAI
Why would you wanna change rooms?

Foster swallows.

FOSTER
I don't know.

Renai stares at her son. She kisses him again.

RENAI
Your brother needs you. Goodnight honey.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Josh lies in bed, reading Foster's award. Renai is beside him.

RENAI
Something happened today. I didn't want to tell you in front of Foster.

JOSH
What?

RENAI
I heard something coming from Cali's room. A man's voice. On the baby monitor...it scared the hell outta me. I went in there and no one was there.

JOSH
Could it have been interference?

RENAI
I don't know. It was so clear. I was sitting at the piano and I heard this...whispering on the baby monitor. So I held my ear up to it--

SUDDENLY - a noise interrupts. An arrhythmic KNOCKING sound, like a drunk pounding on a tavern door after closing.

It is the front door.

JOSH
Who the hell is that?

Josh knows it's his job to check, but he doesn't want to.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Stay here.

He gets up.

INT. FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Josh approaches the front door, flashlight in hand. He peers through curtains at the front step.

It's too dark to see anything.

JOSH
Hello? Who's there?

Only the wind replies.

He aims the flashlight at the glass, shining it into the thick darkness. There is no one on the front step.

Josh presses the flashlight against the window, arcing the beam across his front garden. Leans in close to the glass...

And then--

Nothing. There's no one there.

He makes sure the door is locked, then flips open a security system panel on the wall, pecking at the buttons on it.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Renai sits up in bed, listening. Hears nothing...

...until the low moans of a baby crying float out of the baby monitor. Renai hurls the sheet aside.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Renai pads down the hall, tentative.

She reaches the open door to Cali's room. Sees the silhouette of Josh standing over Cali's crib. Exhales with relief.

RENAI
Who was it, Josh?

Josh appears at the opposite end of the hallway.

JOSH
What did you say?

Renai SCREAMS as the silhouette recedes into the shadows.

RENAI
There's someone in there!

She RUNS towards Josh.

RENAI (CONT'D)
There's someone in Cali's room!

Josh BOLTS down the hall, flicking on the light, terrified.

The nursery is empty. Cali is sleeping. Terrified, Josh enters the room. Scans around. Only toys and colorful wallpaper.

He steps in further. He's not cut out for this.

SHRIEEEEEEEEEEEKKKK!!!!!! SHRIEEEEEEEEEEEEEEK!!!!!

The house alarm screams to deafening life, shaving a few years off Josh's life in the process. He JOLTS, whipping around.

JOSH
(to Renai)
Grab Cali and Foster!

Josh charges down the hall into the--

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

--snatching up a fire poker from the fireplace and continuing--

INT. FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

-- to the front door, which is swinging open. Holding the fire poker aloft, Josh scans the area.

Renai races past, carrying Cali and dragging Foster behind her. They barrel toward Dalton's room.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Josh scans the kitchen. It is empty.

The alarm wails in the background.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Josh inches his way up the hall, hand shaking.

INT. DALTON'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Renai holds Foster and Cali close to her. Dalton is lying behind them.

Directly across from Dalton's room is the laundry. The door is ajar, offering a view into the darkened room beyond.

Renai *sees something* in the dark...a figure. A boy.

It looks like Dalton. He reaches out to Renai--

--until another HAND...a pale hand...reaches across and shuts the laundry door, sealing the boy off from her view.

RENAI
Josh! The laundry!

INT. LAUNDRY - SAME TIME

Josh bolts up the hall, panicked. He reaches the laundry door, grabbing the handle. Hesitates.

He propels the door open with a shove, flicking on the light.

The room is empty. No windows, no doors for escape...just a washing machine and a dryer.

EXT. LAMBERT HOME - NIGHT

A home security officer trudges down the steps of the house.

Renai, Josh, Foster and Cali all stand outside in their pajamas, shivering in the frigid night air.

SECURITY OFFICER
There's no one in there, it's all clear. If someone was there, they're gone now.

Renai steps away from the children, out of their earshot.

RENAI
I saw somebody.

SECURITY OFFICER
Maybe it was a shadow...?

RENAI
No. It wasn't a shadow, it was a man. He was tall, and he long, greasy hair. He was wearing a grey jacket. He looked right at me.

SECURITY OFFICER
Well, like I said...he's gone now.

Renai looks to the others. Sees only disbelieving faces.

INT. GYMNASIUM, FORRESTER HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Josh's students scuffle about on stadium seating, arranging themselves for a CLASS PHOTO. They're not doing a great job.

A male photographer does his best to compose them, not doing a great job of hiding his bitterness about the fact that he's shooting school photos instead of Vanity Fair spreads.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Okay, face the front ladies and gentlemen...come on...hold still...
(muttering to himself)
I'm trying to record the peak of your pathetic lives here.

Josh stands off to the side, lost in his own thoughts. Tired.

PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)
Mr. Lambert, would you like to step in please?

Josh snaps out of his own head.

JOSH
Uh...what?

PHOTOGRAPHER
Could you step in so that we can take the photo? *Quickly* please.

JOSH
Just take it without me.

PHOTOGRAPHER
We need you in the photo, sir.

JOSH
No, you don't. Just take the damn photo without me, okay?

The class settles down, shocked by the outburst. Chastened, the photographer turns to the class, gripping the camera trigger.

PHOTOGRAPHER
I can't believe this is my life.
(beat; to class)
Ready kids? Say asshole teacher!

INT. GYMNASIUM, FORRESTER HIGH SCHOOL - LATER

The students file out of the gym. Josh sits in the bleachers, head buried in his hands.

ALANSO (O.S.)
I hear things.

Josh looks up, seeing Alanso.

JOSH
What?

ALANSO
I spend so much time in the office, I hear things. I heard about your son. I'm sorry.

JOSH
Thank you, Alanso.

ALANSO
Times like these...people realize that science doesn't have all the answers. There is a higher force at work.

JOSH
I wish I had your belief. Things would be a lot simpler.

ALANSO
Things are simple. You just can't see it. Put your faith in Him.

He places his gold cross necklace in Josh's hand, then leaves. Josh watches him go, then takes out his cell phone.

JOSH
(into phone)
Hey...I just found out I have to stay back tonight and finish off mid-term grades. It could be a while, there's a lot to go through. Don't wait up. Bye.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Josh sits on a park bench, staring into the distance. He takes out a flask of whisky, swigging from it.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Renai lies in bed, staring at the ceiling. Alone.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Renai shuffles in, pouring herself a glass of water. Then she hears it. A low muttering. It is coming from Dalton's room.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Unnerved, Renai peers through the open door. Josh is sitting beside Dalton's bed, reading to him.

JOSH
The men all walked down to the waters edge...and they stood there and asked the beast to come forth. And the beast roared back "No!". And so they dived in after it...

EXT. LAMBERT HOME

In the sunlight, the house looks like a happy place.

INT. DALTON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Dalton's face is a picture of serenity.

A new day-shift nurse, KELLY (29), checks on his feeding tube. Renai watches from the doorway.

KELLY
You okay?

RENAI
Yeah.

KELLY
I was going to head off for an hour or so. Are you alright here?

RENAI
Of course. Anything from Dalton?

KELLY
No. I'm sorry.

Renai nods. Her eyes brim with tears. The cracks are showing.

KELLY (CONT'D)
Keep providing him with stimuli. I've seen it work time and time again. Read to him. Even if you're doing something else, you can play him music that he likes. Don't give up.

She throws a scarf over her shoulder and stands.

RENAI
I won't, I just...I haven't slept much the last couple of nights. I feel like the universe is trying to see how far I can bend before I break.

KELLY
The universe picked a fight with the wrong chick.

RENAI
Thanks, Kelly. You're a saint.

KELLY
No, I'm not. I'm doing my job. I *chose* to be here. You didn't choose any of this. You're the strong one.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Renai surveys the living room. It is a total mess.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Water cascades out of a faucet. Steam rises from the water.

Renai lets bath salts fall into the tub. She almost looks relaxed just smelling them.

She starts to undress, then turns --

-- and YELPS in fright.

A person is standing behind the distorted glass window, staring in at her.

The shape of the person's head and shoulders can clearly be seen, but the glass is too opaque to make out any features.

Renai slips, grabbing the sink. When she glances up, the figure is gone.

Trembling, Renai opens the window. Very, very slowly.

It is fifteen feet off the ground, with a sheer drop below it.

EXT. LAMBERT HOME - NIGHT

Renai sits on the front steps, alone. It is late. She looks somehow tired and wired at the same time. Smoking a cigarette.

Josh pulls in. Fumbles out of his car, tipsy.

JOSH
What are you doing up?

RENAI
It's midnight, Josh.

JOSH
When did you start smoking?

RENAI
You've been coming home late every single night. You've never had to do that in all of the years you've been at the school. Now all of a sudden you have to stay back late?

JOSH
I don't like it either, but I'm grading tests. What choice do I have? We've gotta pay Dalton's bills.

RENAI
Your mother is paying Dalton's bills, Josh. I know because she reminds me every chance she gets.

JOSH
Jesus, I can't win with you. That's my son in there too, not just yours!

He paces, the anger sobering him.

JOSH (CONT'D)
I've always felt like less than good enough for you. I feel it every time you mention our bills. That subtle voice that says 'can't you get a job that pays more than a teacher'? And now I can't even look at you without feeling it.

RENAI
You're projecting that onto me. You've written an entire story about I'm how I'm feeling without once asking me how I'm feeling.

JOSH
I don't need to ask. I know you.

RENAI
I am losing my mind here in this house, Josh. I'm scared and I need you and you're not here. Where are you?

JOSH
I told you, I'm grading tests.

RENAI
I don't mean that. I mean you're not here. With me. In this situation. You're avoiding it, like you do anything stressful, whether it's this or a parking ticket.

JOSH
Christ, I should have stayed at the school.

RENAI
There you go again.

Renai stands up and walks inside the house. The door closes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Josh tosses a pillow onto the couch, setting himself up for the night. He curls up on it, pulling a blanket over himself.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The witching hour. Still. Quiet...save for the omnipresent clock.

INT. DALTON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dalton is as still as we've seen him. And then...he twitches. A slight facial twitch, but we see it.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Josh snoozes, head arched at a bad angle. His back will regret sleeping on this couch.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Renai tosses and turns, restless in sleep.

Her eyes open and she sucks in a breath. Bad dreams.

She blinks and looks around the room, surprised to be alone, sitting up in fright. Until she remembers why. She eases back onto the bed. Then she looks over at the window.

<u>There is a man standing outside it</u>.

He is not looking in at her...he is pacing back and forth, furiously smoking a cigarette. Back and forth, back and forth. Agitated. He has long, black, greasy hair and a grey jacket.

Every muscle in Renai's body freezes. She becomes a glacier.

Her eyes are drilled to the man, unable to move. By sheer will, she manages to direct them towards the bedroom door. Opens her mouth but no words will come. Finally--

RENAI
Jo....osh....Josh....Josh...

She glances back at the window.

<u>THE MAN IS NOW IN THE ROOM</u>.

He paces back and forth between the bed and the window, just as he was outside, ignoring Renai. Smoking like a fiend.

And then, suddenly, he stops pacing. Looks up. Straight at Renai - as if just realizing she was there.

For a moment their eyes are locked in silence...

...and then the man's face contorts in anger and he CHARGES towards her, arms outstretched, GROWLING in fury.

MAN
DON'T YOU FUCKING DARE!

Renai lets out a SHRIEK of terror that could strip paint. A cry from the depths of her soul.

She propels herself backward, falling off the bed and scrambling back into the corner.

Josh CHARGES into the room, flicking on the light--

--seeing only Renai, huddled in the corner, screaming.

JOSH
What is it? What is it?!

Renai is incoherent. She cannot stop screaming. Josh grabs her by the shoulders.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Renai, what is wrong?!

RENAI
The man -- he was there -- he tried to -- there was a man there!!!

Foster runs into the room, visibly terrified. He sees his mother and instantly begins crying. He runs to his dad, holding onto his leg.

In the background, Cali begins crying, her screams contributing to an overwhelming din.

JOSH
There's no one here.

RENAI
I saw somebody!

JOSH
There's no one here.

RENAI
Don't you dare not believe me!

JOSH
I believe you, okay? I just don't know what you want me to do.

RENAI
I want you to tell me that we can leave this house. I will not spend one more night here. I wanna leave, I wanna go!

FOSTER
I don't want the man to get me.

The realization that her child is terrified quiets Renai.

All is suddenly silent, save for the cries of Cali in the background. Josh holds his son tight.

JOSH
You're okay, buddy. I've got you.

He and Renai exchange a look.

RENAI
I'm sorry.
(beat)
I can't...I want to leave this house. I can't be here anymore.

JOSH
To move now would be...we would have to rent somewhere. It's not--

RENAI
Please, Josh.

An agreement passes between them.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - DAY

A moving truck is parked outside an average suburban home.

Movers mill about, hauling boxes and couches.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - DAY

Renai unpacks boxes. An elderly woman, LORRAINE (65), helps to unpack. This is Josh's mother. She has a curt, disapproving manner about her that doesn't always make her easy to love.

She is actually moving more quickly than Renai, who groans as if her back were aching as she stoops down to pick up books.

RENAI
Lorraine, you shouldn't have to do any of this. Sit down.

LORRAINE
Nonsense. I'm perfectly capable of putting a few things away. I did it for Josh his whole life. He never was good with tidying up.

RENAI
I know, but I just feel so bad.

LORRAINE
I think it's you who should be sitting down by the looks of it.

She boosts a photo frame from one of the boxes. It is a portrait of Renai, Dalton, Foster and Josh. In happier times.

Lorraine seems taken aback by it.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
I can't believe you got Josh to sit still for a photo.

Renai reclines against the wall, surveying her new living room. Her *new* new house.

RENAI
I can't believe we're doing all this again, that's what I can't believe.
(beat; looks at her)
I know you think I'm crazy.

Lorraine stops unpacking and fixes Renai with a stare. They've never really gotten along before. Adversity has brought about a truce.

LORRAINE
Nobody - not me, not anybody - knows what you're going through right now. Whatever you have to do to get through it, do it. And never apologize for it.

Renai hugs her. It's a new thing for them and a bit awkward.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

DR. BRYCE TRIMBLE (52) sits opposite Renai and Josh. Spread out in front of him are a series of X-Rays, labelled DALTON LAMBERT. His office is big and expensive.

Renai looks hopeful. Josh looks like a shell of a man.

RENAI
We just wanna say...thank you so much. For helping us out with this, doctor. We can't tell you how much it means to have you involved.

DR. TRIMBLE
I'm glad to help.
(beat)
Unfortunately...these recent tests have proven inconclusive. There's absolutely nothing abnormal here.

Josh and Renai deflate.

JOSH
So...if you're the top of the food chain with this stuff, where does that leave us?

DR. TRIMBLE
I don't know. There is a research team in Boston who specialize in a new form of treatment. They try to stimulate the patients brain with electric pulses. It has a good success rate with victims of brain injury. We could try that.

RENAI
So there's hope?

DR. TRIMBLE
There are more things we can try.
(beat)
The hope part is up to you.

INT. DALTON'S BEDROOM, NEW HOUSE - DAY

Renai sits beside Dalton. Staring at him. She runs her fingers through his hair, touching his skin.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - DAY

A needle touches an LP.

The pops and crackles of record hiss spit forth, followed by the lilting guitar strums of 'Tip Toe Through The Tulips'.

The quavering falsetto of Tiny Tim accompanies the guitar.

TINY TIM (V.O.)
(from record)
Tip-toe by the window, by the window, that is where I'll be...

Renai walks away and we follow her down the hall into --

INT. FOSTER'S BEDROOM, NEW HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

-- a mess as only a child can make.

Renai picks up a plate and a fork and knife from the floor. She walks out and we DON'T CUT, tracking with her --

INT. HALLWAY, NEW HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

-- back down the hall, towards the kitchen. The records continues warbling in the background.

TINY TIM
(from record)
Oh tip-toe, from the garden, by the garden, of the willow tree...

Renai passes the living room.

What she doesn't see is the child standing in the middle of the room, facing the record player.

The boy is dressed in clothes from another time, but children's clothes just the same.

He is dancing awkwardly, shifting his weight from one foot to foot the other sheepishly, as if trying it for the first time.

Renai keeps walking and we stay with her as she moves past the child, following her into the --

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

-- mess of the kitchen.

She sets the plate down in the sink, on top of a stack of other dirty dishes.

With a sigh she runs the hot water over the dishes.

With a sudden POP, the record starts skipping.

Bump...bump...bump...

Renai shuts off the water, heading back to the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She marches in, annoyed.

Then freezes.

Her bookshelf is empty. The books that once sat on it are now scattered across the floor.

Bump...bump...bump...

Renai scans the books.
Then
she
hears
it...

Giggling.

She pivots her head towards the darkened hallway. There, she sees a child, hidden in shadow, standing in the hall. Staring at her.

Bump...bump...bump...

Renai doesn't move. Doesn't breathe.

And then suddenly, the child turns and runs down the hall, disappearing into Dalton's bedroom.

RENAI
Oh my God, Dalton...no...

Summoning every ounce of strength, Renai troops down the hall towards Dalton's room.

INT. DALTON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Renai pushes the door open.

Dalton lies in the center of the room on his gurney. The only sound is his breathing.

Renai surveys the room. It is empty.

Bump...bump...bump...

She steps inside, glancing over at a cabinet. In the foot-high space beneath it, a small white shoe protrudes slightly.

A child's shoe.

Heart pounding, Renai bends down, peering into the darkness under the cabinet.

Bump...bump...bump...

The shoe does not have a foot in it. It is simply a discarded shoe. There is no one under the cabinet.

BANG!!!

The cabinet doors EXPLODE open as the child bursts out, giggling. Only we see that it is not a child.

It is a DWARF. A man in child's clothing. The dwarf runs past Renai as she LEAPS back. He runs out of the room, giggling. All is quiet again.

Bump...bump...bump...

Renai gets up, unsure of what to do. Numb with terror.

SUDDENLY-- the record pitches back to life, the volume startling. Renai JOLTS, falling backwards.

INT. CLASSROOM, FORRESTER HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

A darkened class room.

An older janitor, NED (68), shoulders the door open, carrying a mop. He STARTS when he sees Josh, sitting at his desk in the pale light of a desk lamp. Alone.

NED
Josh...didn't see you there.

JOSH
Sorry to scare you.

NED
What are you up to this late?

Josh holds up his flask of whisky. He's a bit soused.

JOSH
Where did all the bartenders who listen to your troubles go, Ned?

Ned nods sagely. He sets down his mop and grabs a chair, sitting in front of Josh with a sigh. He takes the flask.

NED
Never drink alone. If you take the dirty jokes out of drunkenness, all you're left with is the self loathing.

He downs a hit from the flask, then hands it back.

JOSH
I don't need whisky for that.

NED
Bah. You people think too much. Used to be, if life threw a shitstorm at you, you'd grab the nearest umbrella. Your generation would spend a day googling what brand to buy.

Josh laughs despite himself.

JOSH
I probably would too.
(beat; takes a drink)
It's funny, I've always known I was the type of person that things didn't happen to. I made peace with it. I thought to myself, it's okay - I'll never win the lottery or climb Mount Everest...but I'll never get a rare tropical blood disease either. It works out.
(beat)
Now I'm the guy whose son is in a mysterious coma.

NED
Things happen to everybody. Even to good people like you. And they're gonna keep happening the older you get, believe me. No use sittin' in the dark drinkin' over it. Go home. Be with your wife. Tell her your what's on your mind.

He takes the flask and has another swig.

NED (CONT'D)
There sure as hell isn't any umbrellas 'round here.

EXT. NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

Josh pulls up to the house. Turns off the car.

An old Cadillac is sitting in the driveway. Josh clambers out of his car and peers in through the window of the Cadillac, quizzical.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

Renai is huddled on the couch in the living room, gripping her knees to her chest. A man is sitting next to her; a handsome, soft-spoken Anglican priest, FATHER NATHANSON (40).

Josh enters. There are subtle changes in his coordination and speech from the booze.

JOSH
This is the first line of a joke. Guy comes home to find his wife with a priest...

Father Nathanson stands, as does Renai.

RENAI
Josh, this is Liam Nathanson. A very old friend of mine.

FATHER NATHANSON
Nice to meet you. I've heard a lot about you.

JOSH
Can't say I've heard the same, Liam. At least I know you're not sleeping with her.

LORRAINE (O.S.)
Don't be rude, Josh.

Josh turns to see his mother, holding a tray of tea. He frowns.

JOSH
What is going on here?

FATHER NATHANSON
I should be going. Thank you so much for the tea.

RENAI
Thanks, Liam.

He clears his throat and exits, quickly and quietly.

JOSH
Okay, would anyone mind telling me what the hell is going on here?

LORRAINE
Please sit down, Joshua.

JOSH
“Joshua?” Oh Jesus...

LORRAINE
Sit down.

JOSH
The melodramatic way in which you two are conducting yourselves right now is scaring the shit out of me, so just tell me what’s wrong.

LORRAINE
Nothing is wrong. We want to talk.

JOSH
Nobody asks you to sit down unless something is wrong. If a doctor calls you into his office and asks you to sit down, you’re fucked.

RENAI
There’s no use, Lorraine. He’s been drinking.

JOSH
I have not been *drinking*. Not enough that we can’t talk to each other, Renai. And don’t judge me in that bitchy tone, okay?

RENAI
(to Lorraine)
He would never speak to me like that before.

JOSH
Christ. You’re acting like I’m some lush who comes home and beats you with a belt. At least I’m *speaking to you*. You suddenly have to speak to a *priest*. Or my mother who, up until a couple of weeks ago, you couldn’t stand.

RENAI
You’re an asshole.

LORRAINE
Your wife needs you. Now sit down and listen to her. I won’t ask you again.

Josh obeys. His mothers tone can still shut him up.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
Go on, Renai. Tell him.

RENAI
This...thing that was in the other house. It followed us.

Josh shifts in his seat. Agitated.

LORRAINE
Let her speak.

RENAI
I saw someone again today. In the house. It looked like a young boy. I followed it into Dalton's room... but it wasn't a child.
(beat)
This thing is here. I know it.

JOSH
So...what? You called in a priest to get rid of it?

RENAI
I didn't know what else to do.

JOSH
Are you kidding me?
(to Lorraine)
Was this your idea?

RENAI
No. It was mine.

JOSH
You've never been to a church in your life. Now you're inviting a priest into our home? I feel like I don't even know you right now.

RENAI
I'm scared.

JOSH
This is a fantasy, and you need a therapist, not a member of the clergy.

RENAI
(to Lorraine)
I told you...

LORRAINE
What's happening to Renai is real.
I've seen it for myself.
(beat)
I came here today because last night
I had a dream about this place.

INT. KITCHEN, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

We are FLOATING through the corridor, looking through Lorraine's POV.

We are inside her dream.

LORRAINE (V.O.)
I was in this house...but it was
late at night.

The POV keeps moving, out of the kitchen and into the hall.

LORRAINE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I tried to be quiet. I didn't want
to wake anybody. I was afraid.

The POV floats down the hall, reaching a door. The door opens, revealing Josh and Renai, sleeping.

LORRAINE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I looked into your bedroom. You
were both asleep.

The POV keeps moving down the hall.

LORRAINE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I knew that I was asleep in the
dream...but I could feel that
someone was awake in the house.

We keep pushing on, reaching the door to Dalton's room.

LORRAINE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I went into Dalton's room.

The door pushes open. In the dark, we can see Dalton, in bed.

LORRAINE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
There was someone in there with him.

The POV turns to see a DARK FIGURE, standing in the corner.

LORRAINE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
A man was standing in the corner of
the room.
(MORE)

LORRAINE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I asked him who he was...he said he was a visitor. I asked him what he wanted...he said Dalton.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - DAY

Lorraine is clearly unsettled by the dream.

LORRAINE
I can still hear that voice.

She looks up at Josh - and SCREAMS!

*Over Josh's shoulder, crouched down behind the couch and peeking up over the armrest at Lorraine, is a DIABOLICAL FIGURE. His face is **PURE RED** with smeared lipstick. His scalp is completely bald, yet tufts of hair dangle above his ears. Other than his face, his skin is charcoal black.*

Lorraine recoils back, utterly petrified.

JOSH
What is it?

Lorraine stares eerily into his eyes. Frozen.

LORRAINE
He's here.

Renai looks to Josh, who is at a total loss. She is crying.

RENAI
Help us...

His anger fades and he steps over and takes her in his arms.

JOSH
I don't know how.

LORRAINE
I know somebody who can help...if you're willing to ask for it.

EXT. NEW HOUSE - DAY

A battered van is parked in the driveway of the house.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - DAY

Renai and Josh stand in front of two men. They are silent.

The shorter one is a wiry young man who looks like he spends most of his time in dark rooms. Not a member of the beach volleyball team. This is SPECS (32).

The other is TUCKER (33), a larger man with scruffy facial hair. He is eating a Hot Pocket.

SPECS
So you must be Josh?

JOSH
Yeah.

SPECS
That wasn't psychic. Lorraine told me your name.

JOSH
Oh.

SPECS
I'm Specs.
(beat; spooky voice)
I'm here to solve your problem. I'm just kidding with the voice. We take this very seriously.

RENAI
So is Elise coming or...?

SPECS
She won't be joining us yet. Usually we handle all the background stuff, then she gets involved when we have the facts.

TUCKER
Helps weed out the nutjobs.

RENAI
Okay...

JOSH
This is a little uncomfortable. Speaking for myself. I'm not used to this kind of stuff.

SPECS
We understand completely. Ninety six per cent of the people we deal with have had no experience with this type of phenomena before.

He takes out a notepad and pen.

SPECS (CONT'D)
I would like to start by interviewing you both. Can we record your answers?

RENAI
Ah...sure.

SPECS
My assistant will check different areas of the house for electrical anomalies. I'll get him started. Tucker, would you follow me?

INT. KITCHEN, NEW HOUSE - DAY

Specs leads Tucker into the kitchen.

TUCKER
Assistant?

SPECS
Could you not eat that in front of the clients?

TUCKER
Assistant?

SPECS
Finish it in here. This industry gets laughed at enough as it is.

INT. LIVING ROOM, SPECS' APARTMENT - DAY

Specs is halfway through interviewing Josh and Renai.

SPECS
Do you or any of your children suffer from epilepsy or autism?

RENAI
No. I mean, our son...

SPECS
Right. I heard about this from Lorraine. He is in a coma, the cause of which is unknown?

RENAI
Yes.

SPECS
Do either of you habitually use drugs or alcohol?

RENAI
No.

SPECS
No drugs at all?

RENAI
I take anti-depressants sometimes.

SPECS
Do you have a history of clinical depression?

RENAI
Not a history. I've had bouts of it. In the past.

Renai is uncomfortable. Specs makes a note. The camera beeps.

SPECS
Tucker, could you check the camera?

TUCKER (O.S.)
I'm still assisting in the other room.

SPECS
Whenever you're ready then.

A long beat. Tucker finally enters, adjusts the camera.

TUCKER
(to Renai and Josh)
He handles administration, I handle technical. It's an even split. He couldn't change a light bulb and I'm no good with paperwork. It bores me senseless.

Specs clears his throat, peeved. Continues.

SPECS
Do you have any history of sexual abuse in the family?

JOSH
No.
(beat)
I'm sorry, I have to ask how this relates to our problem?

SPECS
Nine times out of ten, when someone comes to us with a problem like this, it's because of an inward cause *within* the family unit...not a physical force outside of it.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, NEW HOUSE - DAY

Specs and Tucker mill around the room. Tucker is carrying a small electronic device. He holds it against the wall.

JOSH
What is that?

TUCKER
Tri-field meter. It measures DC fields and the natural electro magnetic environment.

SPECS
Sometimes old wiring can leak into the atmosphere. It can cause hallucinations, changes in energy.

TUCKER
Yeah. It's a little more complicated than that, but, you know, you get the general idea.

SPECS
It's basically that.

TUCKER
Not really, but whatever.

SPECS
(to Josh)
The tech stuff's not relevant to you anyway.

TUCKER
It's very relevant, but it's all good.

INT. CORRIDOR, NEW HOUSE - LATER

Tucker edges into the corridor. He switches out the light, then takes what looks like a modified VIEW-MASTER TOY out of his shoulder bag, holding it up to his eyes.

He stalks down the corridor with it. All is quiet.

TUCKER'S POV THROUGH VIEWMASTER - different filters highlight different degrees of UV light. Each slide changes the readings.

He approaches the grandfather clock. Another slide clicks into place - showing us TWO FIGURES. Standing beside the clock.

In the negative light, they look like females.

Tucker lowers the device. There is no one there.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - SAME TIME

Specs packs up the video equipment, babbling to Josh and Renai.

SPECS
Epilepsy in one of the children mostly. It's very common. If we approach things academically, it lets us find the genuinely interesting cases.

Tucker backs into the room. Very slowly. He is afraid.

TUCKER
I think we can call Elise now...

INT. FRONT DOOR, NEW HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

Josh opens the door to see an elderly woman, ELISE RAINIER (73), who despite her years maintains a sprightly energy.

There is absolutely nothing morbid or dour about her.

JOSH
Mrs. Rainier?

ELISE
No, my mother couldn't come, it's just me. Elise. You must be Lorraine's son? You've grown since I last saw you.

JOSH
Last saw me?

ELISE
Your mother and I have been friends for a long time.

Elise steps inside. Renai, Tucker and Specs gather around her. Everyone becomes very subservient, like the Queen just arrived.

ELISE (CONT'D)
(re Specs and Tucker)
They're very good assistants but I can't get them to dress any better.

RENAI
Hi. I'm Renai.

ELISE
Pleased to meet you. I'm Elise.

Elise takes her hat off and scans the room, taking a deep breath. Tucker jabbers, eager to please.

TUCKER
We took Tri-field and EMF readings of the whole house. All the wiring, alarm clocks, radios, toasters, TV, record player, fuse box. Nothing went off the charts.

ELISE
And the previous home?

Tucker and Specs look at each other. *Oh shit*.

SPECS
Tucker hadn't monitored that yet. I could jump on that this afternoon if you like? Make up for lost time.

TUCKER
Yeah, but who would work the equipment? I'll need to be there. You know what, don't even sweat it. I'll make myself available.

ELISE
No, that's fine, gentlemen.

She stares up at the ceiling, as if seeing something they can't.

ELISE (CONT'D)
I don't think bad wiring is the problem here.

She drifts over to the bookshelf, her hand landing on the stack of photo albums Renai looked through in the opening scene.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Hmm.

Renai and Josh exchange a look.

ELISE (CONT'D)
May I walk through the house?

RENAI
Yes. Of course.

ELISE
Steven, do you have your sketchbook?

Specs hurriedly fishes a sketchbook and pencil out of his bag.

SPECS
Yes, I do. Yes, I do. Yes, yes. I do.

ELISE
Good. We're going to need it.

RENAI
What is it for?

SPECS
She tells me what she sees and I draw it. It's the most important part of her process.

TUCKER
His drawings and my photos comprise her visual records.

SPECS
Especially the drawings.

TUCKER
That's debatable.

SPECS
It's not debatable.

TUCKER
It is, but whatever.

SPECS
Onwards and upwards. *Find me a ghost*.

Elise begins walking through the house. Tucker and Specs trail her and we FOLLOW THEM into the--

INT. CORRIDOR, NEW HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

--hallway.

Renai and Josh stay back, sheepish. Elise stalks forward at the front, surveying every nook and cranny of the house.

Elise stops suddenly. She is staring straight at a corner of the hallway, next to the grandfather clock.

RENAI
What is it?

ELISE
There is something here.

TUCKER
This is where I saw it.

Elise calmly mutters something to Specs in a low voice, but we have trouble hearing it - only snatches of key words.

ELISE
...long hair...grey dress...her eyes are...

He immediately starts sketching. His line drawings are fast but detailed. Impressive.

He outlines the wall, the ceiling lamp, the grandfather clock.

And then something else...

Two young women. Standing next to the grandfather clock, dressed in Amish garb. Even in the roughness of the drawing, we can make out their *pleading eyes and pale skin*.

Tucker takes out a camera, snaps some shots. Josh and Renai step forward, seeing the sketch.

Elise keeps moving, heading straight for one door in particular. She stops, running her hand over the wood.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Do I have permission to enter this room?

JOSH
Go ahead.

ELISE
Maybe you could wait back there?

Josh and Renai hug each other. Tucker lowers the camera.

Elise grips the door handle and turns it.

INT. DALTON'S BEDROOM - DAY

The door groans open.

Dalton is lying on his gurney, surrounded by the sluggish drone of hospital equipment. The curtains are drawn and the room is dark.

Elise hesitates...then steps inside.

ELISE
Leave the lights off.

Elise steps closer to Dalton. She runs her hands over his prone body. She shivers as she does.

A ripple of fear passes through her. *Her breath quickens*.

Slowly...*very very slowly*...she gazes up at a corner of the ceiling. Her eyes WIDEN and the look on her face should
be
ABSOLUTE
T E R R O R.

Her arm raises up, her finger extending and pointing at the corner she is glaring at.

RENAI
What is it? What do you see?

Elise cups her hand over her mouth and whispers to Specs, keeping her eyes GLUED to the far corner of the ceiling. We cannot hear what she is whispering.

Hand shaking, Specs feverishly starts to sketch. We cannot see what he is drawing.

RENAI (CONT'D)
What do you see?!

The strokes of Specs' pencil become *faster and rougher*, keeping up with Elise's whispers. Sweat dots his forehead.

Tucker glances at the drawing and steps back instinctively. He holds up his Viewmaster.

POV THROUGH VIEWMASTER - we see the far corner of the ceiling change color as Tucker rotates the lenses inside...but nothing out of the ordinary appears. Just a ceiling.

RENAI (CONT'D)
Tell me!

Suddenly, Renai charges forward, snatching the sketch book.

The drawing is of a hideous form - crouched in the corner of the ceiling, staring down at Dalton below. It is the RED-FACED DEMON Lorraine saw earlier.

His naked body is charcoal black...whilst also strangely translucent, the veins visible underneath the flesh. A corpulent stomach juts out, as if he were pregnant.

Terrified, Renai flicks on the light --

-- revealing nothing but an ordinary ceiling.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - DAY

Elise holds court in the living room.

Renai and Josh hold each other, struggling to comprehend it all.

ELISE
I'm not sure if you are ready to hear this yet...but unfortunately I can't waste any time easing you into it. There is no time left.

She takes a deep breath, preparing herself.

ELISE (CONT'D)
I want you to know that this is what I believe and it may contradict a previous medical diagnosis. However, you called me here and I am taking that as an acceptance of my readings.

RENAI
Go on.

ELISE
Your son...is not in a coma. His physical body is here, but his spiritual body is not.
(beat)
The reason these disturbances followed you to a new home is because...it is not the house that is haunted. It is your son.

This is too much for Josh. Renai, however, wants to listen.

RENAI
I don't understand...

Elise considers what she is about to say carefully.

ELISE
Have you ever heard of astral projection?

RENAI
Out of body experiences?

Elise nods.

ELISE
I call them travellers. These are people with the ability to leave their physical body and travel to different places in an astral form. To some degree, we all have the ability to do it...but most of us subconsciously suppress it or don't know how to access it.

Josh shakes his head, agitated. Renai leans forward, desperate for an answer to her terror.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Dalton is...a very accomplished astral projector. He has been since he was very young. He's not afraid of his ability. And that lack of fear has led him to travel too far and become lost...

RENAI
Lost? Lost where?

Elise gazes up at the ceiling, as if looking into another world.

ELISE
In The Further.

RENAI
What do you mean?

ELISE
The Further is that place beyond our perception, beyond our understanding of the physical world that we can see and touch. It is a place without clocks or measurements, without past or future...an infinite realm that holds all of our dreams...and all of our nightmares.

She turns to look at them.

ELISE (CONT'D)
That is where Dalton is.

Renai cries, unprepared for what she is hearing.

ELISE (CONT'D)
The problem is that with his astral body gone, he has left a physical body with us. An empty vessel.

Josh can't meet her gaze.

ELISE (CONT'D)
And there are entities that know this. They can smell it - the chance to live again. That is why they have gathered around him.

RENAI
How many are there?

ELISE
There are five benevolent spirits. Five different entities for whom Dalton has become a most prized possession. They are trying to get inside his physical body...and they get closer with each passing day.

Her words hang in the air like gunsmoke. Pure fear courses through Josh's eyes. He fidgets, agitated.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Then there are two entities who are...not benevolent. One of them takes the form of a man, the other...

She holds up the drawing that Specs di.

ELISE (CONT'D)
They work together, so desperate are they to possess Dalton. They are the closest of all the entities to getting inside him.
(beat)
I don't want to scare you, but I have never, in all my years of doing this, experienced anything as terrifying as their presence.

RENAI
Is there a way to bring Dalton back?

ELISE
There is something we could try. A way of calling him back. I would need your complete trust.

Josh can’t take it any more. He stands up.

JOSH
No. No. This has gone too far.

RENAI
You said that you’d give her a chance!

JOSH
I *have* given her a chance, and I did that because I wanted to help *you*. But I cannot have somebody telling us that the reason our son is in a coma is because his soul is floating off somewhere in another dimension.

ELISE
I know this is hard to hear.

JOSH
No, it’s not fair is what it is. You’re preying on people’s grief and vulnerability, which is really easy to do in a situation like this.

RENAI
Why did we go to all the trouble of bringing them here if you’re just going to reject what they say?

JOSH
Because I wanted to help you. To put your mind at ease, and if this helped, then great. But to drag Dalton into this? No.

RENAI
Josh, you’re not being fair...

JOSH
Fair? How did the voice of reason become the bad guy here? Don’t you see? You want to believe. Of course you do, honey, anybody would.

The room goes quiet. Josh turns to Elise.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Look, I appreciate what you're trying to do. I really do. But I think it's dangerous to start throwing out false hope like this. I have to put my foot down. My wife is not...mentally well at the moment, and I have to keep at least one of her feet here in the real world.

RENAI
You never believed me...

JOSH
Honey, I'm on your side. But I genuinely think this is dangerous and frankly, a little exploitative.

He turns to Elise, Specs and Tucker.

JOSH (CONT'D)
You come into a home with a seriously ill child, you make a tenuous connection between him and these experiences Renai is having and *viola* - the client starts crying because they're desperate to believe, the tears validate your power, thank you, that'll be six hundred dollars please.

SPECS
We reject more cases than we take. We're not out for money, sir.

JOSH
I know, I know...look, I appreciate your interest and your time. I do. Thank you. Thank you very much.

He goes to the front door, opening it.

ELISE
I completely understand. And I honestly don't blame you for reacting like this.

She walks to the door, followed by Specs and Tucker, who sling their bags over their shoulders sheepishly.

RENAI
No, please...don't go.

ELISE
Thank you for your time.

They exit. The door closes. They are gone.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

Renai lies in bed, awake...a broken shell of her former self. A bottle of anti-depressants sits on the bedside table.

Josh enters the bedroom. Sits down beside her.

JOSH
Look at me for a second, honey.
(beat)
Look at me.

She doesn't look up.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Did you really believe what she said? In your heart of hearts, did you actually take what she was saying literally?

A long beat of silence passes.

RENAI
I don't know...

JOSH
Do you think I don't want to believe in that stuff? Of course I do. It would make life a lot easier if I did. If I believed that some supernatural force was responsible for what's happened to our son...

RENAI
I don't *believe* anything anymore, Josh. I used to. I used to believe that I could keep my children safe. I used to believe everything would be okay. To believe in something, you have to know it to be true.

She turns and looks at him.

RENAI (CONT'D)
The things that have happened to me haven't confirmed any beliefs - they've done the opposite. They've made me question what I believe.
(MORE)

RENAI (CONT'D)
They've made me realize that maybe we don't know as much as we think we do.

Josh paces, at his wits end.

RENAI (CONT'D)
You ask me if I believe what she said to be true and the answer is I don't know. But let me ask you this - in your heart of hearts, can you say for certain that it isn't?

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

Josh lies beside Renai, who is sleeping. He is wide awake, staring at the ceiling.

He gets out of bed.

INT. DALTON'S BEDROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

The door opens.

All is mute as Josh enters, skulking carefully through the darkness.

The curtains lull in the slightest of breezes.

Josh stands over Dalton.

He stares down at his sons body, then lets his gaze drift around the room...past the CLOSET, past the DRAWINGS pinned to the wall and the TOYBOX...all the way to the CORNER of the ceiling that Elise was so frightened of. Josh's eyes drill into the shadows.

Is there something waiting there?

Finally, Josh sits down beside Dalton. He grips his sons hand.

JOSH
Where are you? Where did you go?
(beat)
Can you hear me? I'm begging you to show me that you can hear me...I don't know how to help you. Please tell me what to do.

Josh's torment fills the air...but Dalton doesn't move.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Please God, please help me...give me my son back. I will do anything just to have him back.

Josh studies Dalton's face for a response. Nothing. Not a twitch. He collapses forward onto Dalton. Holding him tight.

JOSH (CONT'D)
I need him back. I need him to show me that he can hear me. Please...

For a moment, all we can hear is Josh's breathing.

Then...something happens. Something Josh doesn't see.

Dalton's face twitches. It is a very slight movement. This movement is followed by something that is hard to miss--

One of the tacks pinning one of Dalton's drawings to the wall begins to wind loose.

It pops free, shooting across the room like a kernel of popcorn...followed by another tack.

The second tack lands in Josh's lap. Puzzled, he picks it up, examining it. He looks up, his eye drawn to the picture on the wall.

With total astonishment, he sees the two remaining tacks works themselves free, popping out of the wall.

The drawing floats down to the ground.

Josh stoops down, picking it up.

It is a drawing split into two halves. The left half is a self portrait of Dalton, lying in bed, looking down from above.

The right half is a depiction of outer space - squiggly stars and bloated planets.

Dalton has drawn another version of himself on this side, flying above the house with another man.

At the bottom of the first drawing, Dalton has written '*Last night I watched myself sleep*'.

A tear falls down Josh's face. He begins to cry. Deep and painful tears he has long pent up.

Beneath the second drawing, Dalton has written '*Then I flew away.*'

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, NEW HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Renai's eyes flutter open. She glances over. No one is there.

INT. KITCHEN, NEW HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Renai shuffles into the kitchen.

Josh is sitting at the kitchen table, staring at Dalton's drawing. He hasn't slept and looks it. He looks up at her.

JOSH
Okay.

Renai approaches Josh and they hug...holding on for dear life.

EXT. NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

The Lambert house is lit from within. Like a Jack-O-Lantern.

INT. DALTON'S ROOM - NIGHT

Action stations.

Tucker sets up two stills camera's around Dalton's room, zipping back and forth between the two tripods. Specs opens up a kit, taking out his notepad and a pencil.

A small, circular table has been set up, adjacent to Dalton's bed. Elise sits at the table, flanked on either side by Josh and Renai.

ELISE
What's most important is that you realize no two attempts are the same. I will be completely honest with you about the results, and if no dialogue is established, I will tell you. I am not in the business of embellishing success. What happens, happens.

Josh and Renai nod grimly, truly out of their depth.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Forget the limits and laws and logic of this world. We are treading in a different place now.

Tucker finally sets his cameras and takes a seat in the corner, holding up a HAND-HELD VIDEO CAMERA.

TUCKER
These still cameras are rigged to pick up changes in the atmosphere, electrical or temperature-wise. Don't be alarmed if they go off.

ELISE
Everything I say while I am in tune will be at a very low volume, so you won't hear any of it. Steven will write it down and repeat it for you.

Specs waits obediently at her side.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Hold on to each other, and stay focused. You'll see things you don't understand. Confusing things. Do not question them or speak in any way.

She turns to Specs.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Dim the lights please.

Tucker reaches up and dims the lights to a very low level.

Elise closes her eyes, concentrating. She relaxes her head, as if meditating, letting it loll on her shoulders.

One of the cameras on the tripod goes off, bathing the room in white light for a split second.

Elise inhales and exhales deeply, slipping away. Soon, she is *very still*.

Specs nods to Tucker silently, then produces an odd looking device made from GREY CLOTH.

It almost resembles a gas mask from World War 1, with a cone shaped muzzle that fits over the mouth and nose. The snout of the facemask is like an elongated elephant trunk, coiling outwards and ending in an old listening device, like an early version of a microphone.

Specs slips two hooks over Elise's ears and gently places the device over her nose and mouth. He then takes a seat next to her, behind Renai, who holds Elise's hand.

Specs takes out his notepad and fixes a small apparatus around his neck that holds a flashlight in place.

He flicks it on, then holds the microphone end of Elise's facemask up to his ear, a pencil gripped in the other hand.

Dead silence descends over the group like a blanket.

Then, we hear something lilt through the old microphone. It is Elise's muttered whispers. Specs begins writing.

Renai opens her eyes to peek at what he is scribbling in cursive.

we are calling out to you dalton

Renai grips Josh's hand tightly.

SPECS
We are calling out to you Dalton.

tell us that you are safe tell us where you are

SPECS (CONT'D)
Tell us that you are safe. Tell us where you are.

For what seems like an <u>eternity</u>, all is quiet and still...

...until Elise's eyelids flutter.

Another unintelligible whisper drifts out of the microphone at Specs' ear. He writes.

who's there?

SPECS (CONT'D)
Who's there?

it is your mother and father we have been looking for you

SPECS (CONT'D)
It is your mother and father. We have been looking for you.

Long pause. Specs writes again, more intense this time.

i need help i can't see in here

SPECS (CONT'D)
I need help...I can't see in here.

follow my voice dalton come back to us

SPECS (CONT'D)
Follow my voice Dalton. Come back to us.

Another long pause. A little too long.

Why aren't you talking anymore dalton?

SPECS (CONT'D)
Why aren't you talking anymore Dalton?

A long beat. Tucker's camera flash goes off again.

if they hear me they'll hurt me

SPECS (CONT'D)
If they hear me, they'll hurt me.

who will hurt you?

SPECS (CONT'D)
Who will hurt you?

the man with fire on his face

SPECS (CONT'D)
The man with fire on his face.

can you find your way back to us?

SPECS (CONT'D)
Can you find your way back to us?

there is no way out

SPECS (CONT'D)
There is no way out.

follow my voice dalton

SPECS (CONT'D)
Follow my voice Dalton.

be quiet they'll hear you

SPECS (CONT'D)
Be quiet, they'll hear you.

they won't hear you just follow my voice

SPECS (CONT'D)
They won't hear you, just follow my voice.

they are coming they heard you help me helpme mom and dad please save me please come and get mepleasecomeandgetmecome

Elise's head TWITCHES as Specs' writes furiously, trying to keep up. His pencil finally SNAPS. He snatches up another.

dalton are you there? dalton?

An agonizing ocean of silence...then this furious scrawl:

listen to me you fidthy whore he isnt here you should not have come here you fucking bitch i wild rip your cunt apart and eat the fucking innards that spild forth from it i haveseeenyouiknowwhoyouarebutyouandthe

Specs writing begins to SHRED the paper as he writes furiously, the scrawl getting out of control. Sweat flies from his forehead as he struggles to get it all down.

Suddenly a PIERCING SCREAM blasts through the microphone and he jerks it away from his ear - then looks over at Elise.

With UTTER DREAD, he sees that she is NO LONGER WEARING THE MASK. She has taken it off and is panting heavily.

The scream continues through the mic, audible to everyone...then peters out.

Shocked silence follows.

Josh glances over at Dalton's bed.

<u>He is not in it.</u>

Stunned, Josh turns back to the table--

<u>--TO SEE DALTON SITTING NEXT TO HIM. STARING AT HIM.</u>

His heart leaps out of his skin and so does Renai's as they both turn towards Dalton. Their son.

Dalton stares at them...not a trace of emotion on his face.

Then he reaches up and grips his bottom jaw with both hands, wrenching it downwards with almighty force and **BREAKING HIS OWN JAW.**

Renai SCREAMS into the abyss as Dalton BELLOWS at them, spit flying from his throat, his tongue hanging down over his dislocated jaw.

He stamps his foot and the table - and everyone sitting at it, Renai, Josh and Elise - go flying backwards as if pushed by a hurricane, smashing into the wall with crushing power.

We realize that Dalton was not sitting at the table, but squatting down awkwardly. Painfully.

He stands up, then steps forward. As Josh and Renai watch, his KNEE begins to BEND BACKWARDS, the tendons stretching and snapping, the knee bending *in the opposite direction*.

His other knee follows and he steps forward - both knees *bending back*.

Specs is rigid in his chair, rooted to the spot, notepad still in hand. When he looks up at Dalton, the flashlight under his chin shines in Dalton's eyes.

Dalton ROARS and advances forward - SLAPPING Specs with the force of ten men. Specs reels backwards, hitting the wall, smashing his head and crumpling like paper.

Elise stands to face Dalton. The CAMERA FLASH goes off again, lighting the darkened room for a split second and showing Elise the lipstick-smeared face of a demon instead of Dalton's face.

Tucker SHRINKS BACK as he captures all this with the video camera.

Dalton steps forward again and Elise CHARGES at him, grabbing Dalton by the hair.

ELISE
Leave this vessel! Leave this vessel!

Dalton BELLOWS again - a howl so course and ungodly that it seems ripped straight from the bowels of Lucifer himself.

ELISE (CONT'D)
LEAVE THIS VESSEL!

Dalton FLIES backwards, hitting the corner of the wall and then CLIMBING IT, arcing his body into the far corner of the ceiling like an expert *contortionist*.

He hisses at them as the CAMERA FLASH fires AGAIN AND AGAIN, showing them split second frames of the red faced CREATURE.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Leave this earthly body!

Dalton shrieks again and somehow the force of the cry knocks Elise down.

The room begins to shake.

Books fly.

The closet doors burst open.

With terror, Elise looks over and sees several figures peering out from within the closet.

Two are the women that Specs' drew. Another is a small man, dressed like a child.

They stare out at Elise, their eyes glinting in the dark.

Elise turns to see Josh. The camera flash STROBES repeatedly and gives us split-second glimpses of an OLD WOMAN, dressed in Victorian era garb - *standing directly behind Josh*.

And then, with absolute fear, Renai sees the LONG HAIRED MAN standing over her. He SCREAMS at her and pushes her against the wall, licking her. She cries out, terrified.

With the spirit world, crashing in around her, Elise pulls herself off the floor and yells again.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Leave his body!

Dalton suddenly SPASMS, dropping out of the corner and hitting the floor like a rag doll dropped off a bridge.

ELISE (CONT'D)
The lights!

Terrified, Specs' scrambles over to the corner, flicking the light switch. The room is instantly flooded with light.

The room has stopped shaking. The screaming has stopped.

RENAI
Dalton!

Renai wrenches herself across the carpet and reaches Dalton's limp body.

RENAI (CONT'D)
Dalton! Dalton!

She listens for breathing. His chest moves. He is still breathing. She holds him and cries. More desperate than ever.

INT. KITCHEN, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

Tucker, Specs and Elise convene in the kitchen, slumped amongst the boxes for the tech gear. All are in shock.

SPECS
I feel like a mountain climber who's been waiting his whole life to climb Everest, and now that I'm standing on the summit, I don't know what to do with myself...

TUCKER
I'll tell you what we do with ourselves. We make a short list of our preferred media outlets, that's what.

He holds up his video camera.

TUCKER (CONT'D)
Watch this.

He hits play on a monitor that his video camera is cabled to. Chaotic images of Dalton from the previous scene SPIT to life.

BEHIND DALTON, we can just make out the blurry image of the RED-FACED DEMON. *Puppeteering* Dalton from behind. Controlling his limbs like a human marionette.

SPECS
Oh my God...

TUCKER
After all the years we've been dining out on morsels like a faucet that turns itself on and off...we finally have some empirical evidence of the real thing. Proof.

He hits pause on the video, freeze-framing the hellish image.

ELISE
Proof? Proof of what? Nine tenths of the world believes that when you die, your soul ascends to sit with God. Would you be telling them something they didn't already know?

TUCKER
That is so not the point. This is not about religion. Here we have irrefutable evidence of a paranormal experience. Our job is to share it.

ELISE
No, our job is not to alert the press and prove the existence of the 'paranormal', as you call it. I'm not out to prove anything. I've known there was a higher plane ever since I was a little girl and I could play hopscotch with people whose names were inscribed on tombstones. What you call paranormal is a fact of life for me.
(beat)
Our job is to help people. The least we can do is spare them the indignity of Sixty Minutes.

She snatches his camera away from him and stands up.

TUCKER
Yeah, until they get their book deal...then you'll wish you'd listened.

ELISE
No, I won't, Tucker. I'll just be proud of you. You two stared down something that would crush most mortals tonight and you stood tall.

They manage a smile.

SPECS
So what do we do now?

ELISE
We answer the door.

SPECS
What do you mean?

There is a knock at the front door.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

Josh sits with Renai's head in his lap. She is too traumatized to speak. Rain dribbles down the window pane.

Josh gets up when he hears the knock at the door. Elise shuffles over to answer it.

She opens the door to reveal Lorraine, wet from the downpour.

Elise steps aside and Lorraine walks in, gravely sedate.

JOSH
Mom...what are you doing here?

ELISE
I asked your mother to come over. I called her immediately after...the session. I told her to hurry over.

JOSH
Why?

Lorraine's usual strong will has evaporated. She looks to Elise.

ELISE
There is something we must talk about. Sit down, Lorraine.

Lorraine follows orders, easing onto the sofa. Eyes down.

Thunder growls in the distance.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Go on. Tell him.

JOSH
Tell me what?

Lorraine swallows and starts talking.

LORRAINE
The reason...I knew to call Elise in this situation...the reason I know her so well...is because I called her myself once. Years ago.

She looks up at Josh.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
To help you, Josh.

JOSH
What are you talking about?

Lorraine can't go on. Elise steps in.

ELISE
It's no accident that your son is such a gifted traveller. The ability was handed down to him.
(beat)
By his father.

FLASHCUT TO:

INT. DARKENED BEDROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

We have returned to the opening scene.

We are looking down on a sleeping child. Chest rising and falling with each breath.

<u>This is JOSH as a child</u>.

We move away from him, exploring the dark room.

FLASHCUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT - PRESENT

Tucker and Specs enter the room, lingering at the back.

JOSH
No...I've never...done that before.

LORRAINE
When you were about eight...you suffered night terrors. Awful fits of pure fear. You were terrified of an old woman who you said would come to visit you at night.

FLASHCUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Again we return to the opening scene...floating down a long hallway.

A window at the end of the hall enlarges as we approach.

<u>*Someone is standing in front of it*</u>.

The murky silhouette of the figure turns and walks away. We follow it, tentative. Turning a corner, we see the figure. Standing in a doorway.

Now we can make out the edges of the figure. It is an old woman. Hair in a Victorian bun. A corseted dress.

IT IS THE SAME OLD WOMAN THAT ELISE SAW.

OLD WOMAN
Let me in.

FLASHCUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

Lorraine closes her eyes, struggling to go on.

LORRAINE
I dismissed your stories. Told you to grow up.
(beat)
Then I saw her for myself.

She looks to Elise, who nods.

Hand trembling, Lorraine retrieves a packet from within her coat. The paper is yellowing. Faded. Soaked from the rain.

Lorraine hands the packet to Josh, who is dumbfounded.

Renai peers over Josh's shoulder, at a Polaroid of a boy, about nine years old, sitting on a couch. Early 70s period.

It is a Young Josh. Behind him is the BLURRED OUTLINE OF A FIGURE.

Josh runs his finger over the shadow. His heart rate speeds up. An old memory is coming back to him.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
At first, I thought it was a camera problem. Then I saw her again.

Josh flips to the next photo - it is another faded frame of Josh as a youngster. This time he stands in an old kitchen.

Once again, there is a figure behind him - clearer this time, but still hidden in silhouette. A step closer to Josh.

Josh flips to the next picture. A BLACK AND WHITE shot of himself as a young boy, lying in bed.

With dread, Josh sees the unmistakable features of an OLD WOMAN, crouching beside his bed. Staring at him.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
In each photo, she got closer and closer to you...

Josh flips to the next picture - in this one, Young Josh is standing by a car.

Behind him, the details of the Old Woman's dress are visible. Her arm is extended...*reaching out for Josh's neck*.

Renai's hand flies to her mouth.

LORRAINE (CONT'D)
Finally, I was so scared, I called Elise.

Sweat pours down Josh's brow.

He lets the photographs flutter from his fingers, backing away. Fragments of memories rock his entire body.

JOSH
I don't...I don't remember any of this...

ELISE
You've blocked it out.
(beat)
But in the back of your mind, you're still afraid of having your picture taken, aren't you?

Josh grabs the wall, weak at the knees.

LORRAINE
I've kept the photos hidden ever since then...until tonight.

ELISE
I advised Lorraine to hide them. To stop taking your picture. And to let you forget.

JOSH
Who is she?

ELISE
A parasite. She befriended your astral body, then drew you out into The Further, just as Dalton has been drawn out.
(MORE)

ELISE (CONT'D)
But she deceived you. All she wanted was an empty vessel. A physical body. Yours.

LORRAINE
I’m sorry, Josh.

ELISE
I didn’t want to make you remember this...I only do it for the sake of your son.

A quiet descends over them.

ELISE (CONT’D)
Your son is out there.
(beat)
And you are the only one who can bring him back.

Josh looks up at her.

JOSH
How long do we have before...that thing...takes him over completely?

All eyes are on Elise.

ELISE
If you cannot reach him tonight, then he is gone forever.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER

The lights have been dimmed. Josh sits on a single person lounge chair.

Elise sits opposite him.

Tucker and Specs set up around her, fixing their cameras in place. Renai leans forward on the couch opposite, chewing her nails to the quick. Lorraine is next to her.

ELISE
Remember who you are and why you are traveling. Keep one foot in this world.
(beat)
Are you ready?

Josh nods. Renai hugs him and they hold onto it. She whispers to him, staring into his eyes.

RENAI
I want you to know something...you have never been less than good enough for me. You've always been perfect for me. You're my best friend...my soulmate. I love you so much.

JOSH
I love you too. I have since the first time you looked at me. I don't exist without you.

Elise drifts over to the piano, lifting the METRONOME from it.

She sets it down in front of Josh, freeing the weighted swing-arm so it moves back and forth.

TICK...TICK...TICK.

ELISE
Close your eyes, Josh...and relax. Breathe deeply. Let all life around you fade out into the background...until the only thing you can hear is the ticking of the metronome.

We PUSH IN on Josh, inhaling and exhaling. TICK...TICK...TICK.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Focus on a spot in the center of your forehead. Feel that spot getting further away as you drift off to sleep.

We are now in an ECU of Josh. TICK...TICK...TICK.

ELISE (CONT'D)
I want you to relax your physical body and let the astral body gain strength...feel it rising out of your chest.

Renai watches, literally and figuratively on the edge of her seat. Tucker and Specs take notes from the corner.

Josh breathes deeply. Eyes shut tightly.

ELISE (CONT'D)
Detach yourself.

Josh's eyes open suddenly and he stands up, frustrated, marching across the living room.

JOSH
This is useless...I have no idea what I'm doing and you just suddenly expect me to...

He turns around and stops dead. His words trail off.

HE IS LOOKING AT HIMSELF.

He sees his own body, sitting in the armchair, eyes closed. Elise is sitting opposite, with her back to the Josh who is now standing.

The living room is exactly as it was - only Renai, Lorraine, Tucker and Specs have disappeared. They are nowhere to be seen.

Stunned into mute shock, Josh stares at his own body in the armchair.

Slowly, Elise turns her head away from the Josh in the chair, staring eerily into the standing Josh's eyes.

She can see him.

ELISE
(softly)
Now you are free.
(beat)
Keep your guide, and a steady stride...and into The Further you go.

She turns back to the Josh in the chair. The room seems to have darkened even more somehow.

Josh turns and glares into the darkness of his hallway as it yawns outwards, eventually swallowed by complete blackness.

He is not in another world. He is in his own house.

NOTE - *The following scenes are not going to be "movie quiet". They will be inhumanly quiet. There will no score. Only sound scape. This is another world and should feel so.*

Josh moves forward, gliding down the hall slowly. He looks down and sees that his feet are slighty *raised off the ground.*

He is floating.

He moves into the darkness of the hall...past the bedroom doors and closet doors.

As he floats past, he scans every darkened corner for the slightest trace of movement.

He reaches the front door. He moves towards it and as he does it OPENS.

EXT. THE FURTHER - NOT NIGHT OR DAY, BUT DARK

His street beckons beyond the door.

Josh floats across his lawn.

There are no people or cars on the street...it is as desolate as a post-apocalyptic wasteland.
A
total
absence
of
LIFE.

Some lights flicker from within the houses, but no movement or signs of human forms. Only mist.

Josh floats an inch above the road, moving down the street.

One thing to notice is that there is a total lack of horizon or city scape here...Josh's immediate surroundings are visible for about one hundred yards or so...anything beyond that, in any direction, fades into blackness. As if someone were shining a giant spotlight down on him.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT - OUR WORLD

Renai watches Josh. He is completely still...in a trance.

His eyelids flutter as his eyeballs probe in all directions underneath.

ELISE
He's in...

EXT. THE FURTHER - NIGHT

Josh keeps moving, his fear registering, even in this world.

He looks down at his feet.

He is frustrated that he can't move any faster. He concentrates with fierce intensity--

--and then watches as his feet touch the ground.

He is walking.

He starts to move faster, gaining control of his movement.

JOSH
Dalton?

The sound of his voice is strangely dead - as if he were inside a soundproof recording studio. There are no walls or angles for it to bounce off.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Dalton? Where are you?

For a long time, there is nothing...

...

...then he sees it.

A figure...shrouded in shadow. Standing on the street corner with his back to Josh.

Josh moves towards the figure.

Closer. Closer.

The man abruptly turns the corner without looking back.

Josh glances around the corner. There is nobody there.

He continues down the street. He sees a little girl. Far in the distance, but close enough to focus on. She stands and stares...

...then turns and walks away. Gone...like an apparition.

He looks to his right and sees--

--A SHADOW.

Behind a curtain in one of the windows, back lit by candle light. As with the others, the shadow turns away and disappears.

Josh walks towards the front door of the house. He reaches it and turns the handle.

INT. HOUSE - THE FURTHER - CONTINUOUS

A long corridor beckons. As with all of this world, it is dark here.

Josh walks into the corridor, looking to his left and right into empty rooms. Living rooms and bedrooms. Devoid of life.

The colors are muted...the palate drained. Only REDS and BLACKS pop out. Blood and darkness.

Josh keeps moving down the corridor.

Up ahead, he sees a figure run past the top of the hall, ignoring Josh.

He presses forward, following the figure.

JOSH
Dalton?

He glances into an empty kitchen. Food rots on the table.

His footsteps have no sound as he continues on.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Dalton?

He passes a door that is partly open. He pushes it wide open.

INT. SMALL ROOM, THE FURTHER - CONTINUOUS

The room is small and empty. A strange room...like a stage.

A figure is sitting in the corner, facing the wall like a child being punished at school.

Josh steps closer, cautious. Takes another step.

JOSH
Where is Dalton?

He steps closer yet again.

His hand reaches out to touch the figures back...

...his fingers are almost grazing the figures shoulder.

Soft laughter behind him. Josh glances back to look for the source.

When he turns back, the FIGURE IS GONE.

He wheels around, seeing the small-statured figure of the DWARF that Renai encountered, stepping through the door of the room.

INT. CORRIDOR, THE FURTHER - CONTINUOUS

Josh sidles back into the corridor. His pace is sluggish, dream-like.

Frustrated, he stops. Then turns to his left.

SOMEONE IS RIGHT THERE IN HIS FACE. A MAN.

The man is not looking at him...only standing very close. His neck lolls on his shoulders...around and around. He seems stuck on a loop. He is dressed in a fifties era suit.

JOSH
Do you know where Dalton is?

The man doesn't acknowledge him.

MAN
Why do I have to put up with you?
What a tramp. You call this a home?
I work all day for this?

He marches away, leaving Josh standing alone.

Josh keeps going, whirling around. He reaches a set of stairs. The stairs descend into darkness.

Josh squints into the dark, afraid.

JOSH
Dalton? Where are you?

The low rumble of this place is the only reply. Josh turns to walk away. A distant voice stops him.

DALTON (O.S.)
Dad...

Josh SNAPS back.

The voice drifted from out of the darkness at the bottom of the stairs.

Josh scurries down the creaky ramp towards it.

INT. HALLWAY, THE FURTHER - CONTINUOUS

The core of a rotten apple. The bowels of hell.

Drenched in shadow, Josh fumbles forward into yet another corridor of this labyrinth.

He realizes he knows where he is. *He is in his OLD HOUSE.* An alternate world version of it.

The lighting is different - it's darker. There are no signs of life. Water drips somewhere.

Josh stumbles forward, seeing an open door.

INT. LIVING ROOM, THE FURTHER - CONTINUOUS

Josh slinks into a darkened and dilapidated living room.

There are THREE PEOPLE in here - a middle aged woman, a middle aged man and a young girl. They are all FROZEN, standing in place as if someone had hit the pause button on their life.

The woman is in the middle of ironing. The man is sitting in an arm chair reading a newspaper. The girl is lying on the floor.

The whole scene looks like a macabre 'Leave It To Beaver' tableau - a cheerful family frozen in time.

Josh steps closer to the mother...

...hairs *prickling up* on his neck when he sees her BLINK. Her body moves slightly. She is not frozen - merely playing statues. Like a street performer keeping as still as possible.

Josh turns to the father. He is the same. His hand shakes, struggling to hold the newspaper in place.

He backs away from them, truly creeped out. His back hits a window and he turns, peering through the glass down at the street below.

A figure, hidden in silhouette, is gazing up at him.

INT. KITCHEN, THE FURTHER - CONTINUOUS

Josh stalks into a kitchen off the living room. A weathered door is adjacent to the kitchen.

The door is ajar.

Through it, Josh can see somebodies leg.

Josh approaches the door, prodding it open gently with his finger.

It is a bedroom. A tattered cot sits against the wall. A YOUNG MAN (17) sits on the cot, holding a rifle. Like the others, he is trying to be completely still, as if on pause.

He is having more trouble than the family, trembling slightly.

JOSH
I'm looking for my son, Dalton.

The boy does not look up. Does not move.

Josh retreats, scanning the kitchen. There are soiled pots in the sink. Rotting food, but no bugs. Josh turns the faucet but no water comes forth.

When he turns back, the YOUNG MAN is gone. No longer in his bedroom.

Josh glances back at the living room.

The Young Man is now standing inside the living room.

Again, he is frozen. Holding his rifle. Looking down at his family, who are now splayed out on the carpet, soaked in BLOOD.

Each of them has a bullet hole in their head.

Repulsed, Josh tip-toes past them. He looks down at the mother - a bullet wound in the center of her chest.

She blinks...still playing dead.

INT. CORRIDOR, THE FURTHER - CONTINUOUS

More corridors disappearing into darkness.

Josh wrenches his hair in frustration. He boils over, screaming at the top of his lungs.

JOSH
DALTON!!!! WHERE ARE YOU?!!!

His cry recedes into nothingness.

DALTON (O.S.)
Dad....

He heard that. Excited, he spins around, trying to determine where it came from.

As he does, he sees that the *entire dead family* is now gathered at the door to the living room. Watching him.

He summons all his strength and starts running, backing away from them.

He drives himself to move faster and faster.

JOSH
DALTON!

DALTON (O.S.)
Dad...help me...

JOSH
DALTON!!

A figure suddenly appears at the end of the hallway.

It is the LONG HAIRED MAN IN THE GREY JACKET. The man who terrorized Renai.

LONG HAIRED MAN
I hear you...

He approaches.

LONG HAIRED MAN (CONT'D)
I hear you, but you don't know what you've done.

He licks his lips.

LONG HAIRED MAN (CONT'D)
There is a place that you can't go to and this is that place.

He is only a few yards from Josh now. He SCREAMS with awesome power, his spit flying.

LONG HAIRED MAN (CONT'D)
YOU MADE A MISTAKE!! I'M GOING TO MAKE SUFFERING A FUCKING BLESSING FOR YOU! I'M GOING TO RIP YOU APART YOU CUNT!!

He CHARGES at Josh, screaming with hellfire fury.

Josh recoils, falling onto the floor, screaming.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT - OUR WORLD

Josh's body JOLTS in the chair and he makes a noise somewhere between a scream and a moan.

RENAI
What's happening to him?!

Elise leans in, attempting to communicate with Josh.

ELISE
You're stronger then they are, Josh. You are a living soul!

INT. CORRIDOR, THE FURTHER

Josh struggles. The Long Haired Man attacks him viciously.

Then something changes in Josh - he gets angry.

JOSH
Get...off..me!

He shoves the Long Haired Man back, pounding into him with the strength of TEN MEN.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Get away from me! Leave now!

Frightened, the Long Haired Man retreats, backing away until he is swallowed up by the blackness.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Dalton!!

DALTON (O.S.)
(still distant)
I'm here...

Josh follows the voice to another stairwell in this Escher-like maze of passageways.

JOSH
Dalton!

DALTON (O.S.)
Here...

INT. BALLROOM, THE FURTHER - CONTINUOUS

From darkness into baroque extravagance.

Josh finds himself in a gilded chamber of long neglected opulence...as if a palace had been stormed, the occupants murdered and the place left to rot.

Mold caked pillars support a ceiling of gold flakes, the rest having rotted way.

Mirrors line the walls, their surface too clouded to see into.

JOSH
Dalton...?

He weaves between pillars, finally coming across a figure, slumped on the floor in the corner like a dog.

It is Dalton.

Josh runs to him. His foot is chained to a PIPE behind him, the clamp binding his right ankle. He looks pale and sick. He looks like one of *them*.

JOSH (CONT'D)
I'm taking you back.

He sees that Dalton is terrified. Looking over Josh's shoulder.

JOSH (CONT'D)
What is it?

He glances back, spotting an open door at the end of the ballroom, light spilling from within it.

There is somebody inside.

INT. MAKE-UP ROOM, THE FURTHER - CONTINUOUS

A grotesque form sits in front of an immense gold-rimmed mirror at a baroque powder table.

It is the RED-FACED creature seen by Elise.

The creature daubs RED LIPSTICK onto its face, arching forward, glaring into the mirror, caking the make-up on.

The room is littered with hundreds of discarded CHILDREN'S TOYS - teddy bears, stuffed animals, dolls (including one white-faced, black-haired doll we recognize). They are scattered about like bones, collecting dust in the shadows.

Suddenly the creature stops what it is doing. It sees something in the mirror.

What it sees is Josh.

INT. BALLROOM, THE FURTHER - CONTINUOUS

With horror, Josh watches as the Red-Faced Man stands up and staggers to the door, peering through the crack at him.

Josh wrestles to free Dalton's leg from the chain. No good.

Behind them the Red Faced Man opens the door. A rage unknown to humans is building up inside the creature. He hisses.

DALTON
Help me, dad...take this off me...

The creature steps closer. Taking his time. Drool seeping from his mouth with each drunken, wayward lope.

JOSH
You're not really here. You're asleep in your bed in our home. Just stand up.

DALTON
He's going to hurt me again...

JOSH
This isn't real. You can do this.

DALTON
He's coming!

JOSH
Just stand up!

Dalton does - and suddenly finds that the chain is no longer attached to his foot.

The Red Faced Man ROARS and the power of his breath sends them FLYING BACK.

RED-FACED MAN
This...issssss....real!

Josh smashes his head on a pillar, blood leaking from his head. The power of this demon far outweighs the others.

RED-FACED MAN (CONT'D)
That...issss...my....boy!

Josh scrambles to his feet and snatches up Dalton, carrying him to the door as the Red Faced Man pursues.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT - OUR WORLD

Josh convulses in the chair, choking.

RENAI
Help him!

INT. CORRIDOR, THE FURTHER

Josh surges down a corridor, carrying Dalton.

The Red-Faced Man hobbles up behind them, his rasping wheeze growing in volume.

RED-FACED MAN
You're here now! With ussss!

Josh stampedes through the front door of the house - but instead of the street, he is facing *another* corridor.

They spill into the second corridor, running again, racing past rows and rows of doors.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT - OUR WORLD

Josh twitches in his chair, sweat beading on his forehead.

JOSH
(moaning)
....ome....onnnnn...

Elise paces in front of him.

ELISE
They've made contact. I know it.
He's found your son.

RENAI
What happens now?

ELISE
We need them to come back. We need
him to find us.

Tucker's equipment begins to shake on the table. The hanging light above them quivers as if an earthquake were rattling it.

A force is building in the room.

INT. CORRIDOR, THE FURTHER

As Josh and Dalton streak down the corridor, each door opens and a different figure staggers out.

Grotesque figures...the solemn dead. Pale skin, hollow eyes. Their dead eyes drill into Josh's soul.

They want what he has - life.

They begin running - chasing Josh. Dozens of them.

Josh stops, seeing that the corridor seemingly has NO END. He yells in frustration.

JOSH
I want to get out!

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT - OUR WORLD

Josh's body SHUDDERS, the cry escaping his lips.

JOSH
....*eeeeet out!*

The room trembles again. Elise looks to Renai.

ELISE
Call out to him!

INT. CORRIDOR, THE FURTHER

Josh whips around, desperate.

DALTON
Listen!

Josh follows the order - and hears it. A faint shout. A siren call from another world.

RENAI (V.O.)
(distant)
Josh, follow my voice...

The voice seems to come from behind the door in front of Josh. He shoves it open--

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT - OUR WORLD

Renai glares at Josh's eyelids...as if he can see her through them.

RENAI
Follow my voice. Come back to us.

The room stops trembling. All is very still.

For a moment, it is as if time has stopped. Nuclear silence. Then...a drawer slides open in the corner of the room.

Lorraine and Renai gasp at this supernatural interruption.

Specs clambers to his feet, approaching the drawer. It contains a note pad and nothing else.

He reaches out to close it...and then JOLTS as a HAND reaches out from within it!

He FLAILS backwards in fright, watching as the hand wrenches a mop of hair into view.

A FULL GROWN BODY BEGINS TO CLAW its way out of the drawer!

INT. DALTON'S BEDROOM, NEW HOUSE - SAME TIME

Drawers in Dalton's room slide open in unison. Then cabinets. The closet BURSTS open.

Pale adult bodies begin to claw their way out of the different doors, undulating out of impossibly small spaces and falling onto the floor like limbless insects.

Cracks are opening in our world and the miserable dead are slithering through the fissures.

INT. KITCHEN, NEW HOUSE - SAME TIME

More doors shoot open - cabinets, closets, the pantry. Forced by unseen hands.

More hideous forms wrench themselves out into our world.

INT. CORRIDOR, THE FURTHER

Josh is exhausted, pushing himself to the limits.

He hears the voice again - distant and small. An echo.

RENAI (V.O.)
Find us...

Josh follows the voice to a door.

He staggers towards it, still supporting Dalton. He slams the door open, falling through it into--

INT. BASEMENT, LAMBERT HOME, THE FURTHER

-- the empty basement.

He is in the basement of his old house. The wooden steps beckon above him.

Renai's voice cries out from behind the door at the top of the stairs.

RENAI (V.O.)
Hurry! Come back to us!

DALTON
Put me down, I can run!

Josh sets Dalton down, who scampers up the stairs. Josh is about to follow when he turns and spies a familiar face.

THE OLD WOMAN.

She leers at Josh through the window of the basement, her visage spookily flecked in candlelight.

Josh is transfixed.

DALTON (CONT'D)
Come on, dad! Come on!

JOSH
Go! I'm right behind you!

Dalton charges ahead as Josh glares back at this face from his past.

JOSH (CONT'D)
You...what do you want from me?

The old woman's eerily unblinking gaze cuts through Josh. A long dormant rage BOILS OVER inside him. He approaches the window, vomiting fury at her.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Get the fuck away from me! I'm not scared of you, just leave me alone! Get away from me!

The old woman's lips protract to unveil a yellow graveyard of molars. A smile to buckle the steeliest nerve.

She raises a lit candle to her lips.

She snuffs out the plume with a single puff...plunging the basement into darkness.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - SAME TIME

Specs staggers back as the skeletal figures emerging from the cabinets ambulate into the living room, surrounding Josh.

RENAI
(to Josh)
Find us!

ELISE
(to Specs)
Check on the boy!

Specs sprints out of the room.

INT. CORRIDOR, LAMBERT HOME, THE FURTHER

We are now locked into a POV shot, pushing down the corridor of the Lambert's NEW HOUSE. The scene of the trance.

Our POV is bee-lining for Dalton's bedroom.

INT. BASEMENT, LAMBERT HOME, THE FURTHER

In another POV shot, we SURGE up the basement stairs.

INT. CORRIDOR, NEW HOUSE, THE FURTHER

Our POV is only a few yards from Dalton's bedroom door.

The Red-Faced Man appears at the opposite end of the hall. Malevolent. Cruel.

He SCREAMS and flits towards us.

The POV keeps going, hitting the bedroom door and FLINGING IT OPEN - seeing DALTON'S BODY sleeping inside.

We SOAR towards it, getting closer--

INT. DALTON'S BEDROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT - OUR WORLD

Specs stands over Dalton's body.

SUDDENLY - Dalton shudders, his legs spasm. His eyes FLICK open and he SUCKS IN A HUGE BREATH.

SPECS
He's awake!

Dalton sits up, panting. Renai charges into the room. He looks at her, registering her appearance.

DALTON
Mom...

Renai literally throws herself at him, wrapping her arms around his body. No words can express.

Renai scoops him up, carrying him out of the bedroom.

INT. CORRIDOR, NEW HOUSE, THE FURTHER

The second POV *whooshes* down the corridor, zeroing in on the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

A scene of desperation.

Elise leans into Josh's face.

The living room is now *filled* with the CREEPING FORMS of the souls who crawled out from within the drawers. All of them marching towards Josh.

ELISE
Find me, Josh! Now! Wake up!

The closest entity reaches out with gnarled fingers and is almost touching Josh--

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE, THE FURTHER

The POV shoots towards Josh's body, seconds away--

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - SAME TIME

Josh's eyes BURST OPEN and he inhales a chest full of air, as if emerging from deep water.

He falls forward, his strength gone.

RENAI
Josh? Josh?

He pants on the floor, barely able to speak.

JOSH
Dalton...?

Dalton and Renai pounce on him.

Josh holds onto Dalton like he's a life preserver, and in a way, for Josh, he is. He laughs, inhaling deeply.

Specs, Elise and Tucker approach. Renai sees them and stands up, tearful. She is lost for words.

RENAI
I don’t know what to say...

She rushes forward and hugs all three of them.

ELISE
Well put.

Josh brings Lorraine in they all embrace in a circle. A group hug for the ages.

JOSH
Now this is worth dying for.

EXT. NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

It’s over.

Specs and Tucker haul a large tripod case to their van, heaving it into the back.

They stand in awkward silence. It’s been a long day.

TUCKER
I guess you did some pretty awesome stuff in there. You deserve some credit.

SPECS
You did good too in an assistant-type way.

Tucker can’t hold his stoic pose any longer. He breaks out laughing, followed quickly by Specs.

TUCKER
Thanks, boss.

They shake hands.

TUCKER (CONT’D)
Dude, I got some amazing shots. We are gonna write a book and my shots are gonna be the main selling point.

SPECS
Yeah.
(beat)
Not the *main* selling point, but definitely important, for sure.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

Renai lie with Dalton on her bed.

DALTON
I'm tired.

RENAI
Too bad. I'm never letting you go to sleep again.

She runs her fingers through his hair.

RENAI (CONT'D)
Did you know we'd come and find you?

Dalton nods.

RENAI (CONT'D)
Whenever you're lost...we'll always come and find you.

They hug.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

Josh wanders out of the kitchen, examining the house as if seeing it for the first time. He is smiling...happier than we have ever seen him.

Elise sits on the couch amongst the remains of Tucker's paraphernalia of the paranormal. Josh approaches her, standing over her.

JOSH
You introduced me to a new world.

ELISE
No. You've been there before, remember? And you'll go back.
(beat)
All of us will...eventually.

JOSH
Maybe I can forget again.

He reaches into his jacket, taking out the eerie photos Lorraine gave him of himself as a child.

JOSH (CONT'D)
I'll start by giving these back.

As he hands them to Elise, she sees with fear that his hand is *withered and wrinkled*.

Like the hand of an eighty year old woman.

Shocked, she looks up at his face.

JOSH (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

Elise stands. She looks haunted. Her eyes wide and unnerved.

ELISE
Nothing, I...

She turns away, reaching for something.

JOSH
What's the matter, Elise?

She spins around and lifts Tucker's camera up to her face, aiming it at him. She depresses the trigger and takes a photo of him, bathing the whole corridor in white light.

Josh recoils back in shock. Elise lowers the camera. She is terrified. Josh suddenly LUNGES at her, slapping the camera out of her hands.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Why the fuck would you do that? Why would you do that? Why?!

He SLAMS her against the wall, his hands around her throat.

Elise chokes in terror, terrified of him.

JOSH (CONT'D)
You of all people! You know! Why would you do that to me when you know what you know? You bitch!

He abruptly stops attacking her, staggering backwards, examining his hands as if he can't believe what he's done. Seething with fury. Panting.

Elise collapses, catching her breath.

Josh swipes a framed photo off the wall and storms away, heading down the corridor...

...swallowed up by the darkness.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, NEW HOUSE - SAME TIME

Renai furrows her brow.

RENAI
What was that?
(beat; to Dalton)
Stay here.

She gets up.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

Renai jogs into the living room. Sees Elise lying on the floor.

RENAI
Elise, what was that noise?

Elise simply looks up at her. The utter terror on her face is palpable. Her neck is bleeding from scratch marks.

RENAI (CONT'D)
Jesus...what happened to you?

Elise just stares, unable to speak. Her fear is contagious.

RENAI (CONT'D)
Where's Josh?
(beat)
Josh? Josh?!

She turns and runs into the corridor, flicking on the lights.

There is nobody there.

INT. CORRIDOR, NEW HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Renai dashes from room to room in the hallway, pitching each door open.

Each room is empty. Josh is nowhere to be found.

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - SAME TIME

Elise stares at Tucker's camera in a state of catatonic dread.

Renai backs into the room, her own fear rising in her gut. She leans down and grabs Elise by the shoulders.

RENAI
Elise, what happened? You're scaring me, tell me where Josh is?

Elise finally looks up at her. Seeing the "expert" so afraid unnerves Renai. When the lion-tamer drops his whip and runs, you know the lion is vicious.

Elise opens her mouth to speak...but nothing comes out.

Instead, she simply holds up the camera, showing Renai the digital display of the photo she took.

We do not see it.

We simply see the look of horror on Renai's face.

FLASHCUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

We have returned to the previous scene - only now we are seeing it through Elise's eyes.

Elise is sitting on the couch, alone. Trying to recover from the nights events.

She glances up when Josh approaches her.

JOSH
You introduced me to a new world.

ELISE
No. You've been there before, remember? And you'll go back.
(beat)
All of us will...eventually.

JOSH
Maybe I can forget again.

Once again, we see him reach into his jacket, taking out the photos Lorraine gave him.

JOSH (CONT'D)
I'll start by giving these back.

As he hands them to Elise, she sees with fear that his hand is *withered and wrinkled*.

Shocked, she looks up at his face.

JOSH (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

Elise stands up, not knowing how to react.

ELISE
Nothing, I...

She turns away, reaching for something. We see her scoop up Tucker's digital camera.

JOSH
What's the matter, Elise?

She spins around and lifts Tucker's camera up to her face, aiming it at him. She depresses the trigger and takes a photo of him, bathing the whole corridor in white light.

--and in that split second, Josh is replaced by the Old Woman!

Elise lowers the camera, horrified. For a beat, the Old Woman just glares at her...

...then she CHARGES at Elise, arms outstretched, wrapping her white hands around the soft flesh of Elise's throat.

Elise CHOKES, eyes bulging, spittle flying from her mouth, as the pale hands of the Old Woman dig into her thorax, droplets of blood running down her chest where the yellowing finger-nails have CUT IN to the flesh.

The Old Woman smiles - a merciless harlequin grin that mocks Elise's pain.

She lets Elise go, letting her drop to the floor.

The Old Woman turns and glares down the corridor. Something has caught her attention. A distant scream.

INT. BATHROOM, NEW HOUSE - NIGHT

The door groans open, a blade of light penetrating pitch black darkness.

The silhouette of the Old Woman floats ethereally into the bathroom. She steps up to the mirror, then reaches into her tattered Victorian dress and produces a candle.

She lights the candle with a match, holding it beneath her chin and glaring into the reflective surface of the mirror.

Instead of seeing her own reflection though, she sees THROUGH the mirror *as if it were a window*.

In it, she can see the BASEMENT of the Lambert's previous residence.

Josh bursts into the basement, carrying Dalton.

DALTON
Put me down, I can run!

Josh sets Dalton down, who scampers up the stairs.

We are watching the same scene we saw earlier play out in the mirror.

Josh is about to follow when he turns and spies a familiar face. He looks at the Old Woman...seeing her through the 'window'.

DALTON (CONT'D)
Come on, dad! Come on!

JOSH
Go! I'm right behind you!

Dalton disappears as Josh glares at the woman.

JOSH (CONT'D)
You...what do you want from me?

He approaches the mirror. WE CIRCLE AROUND the Old Woman, past the mirror and THROUGH THE BATHROOM WALL, emerging on the other side in--

INT. BASEMENT, LAMBERT HOME, INSIDE THE FURTHER

--the basement.

Josh screams at the Old Woman as she stares at him through what he *thinks* is a window. THEY HAVE SWAPPED PLACES. He is now in The Further, and she is in our world.

JOSH
Get away the fuck away from me. I'm not scared of you, just leave me alone! Get away from me!

We KEEP CIRCLING, wiping past Josh's back and completing a 360 degree turn, THROUGH THE WALL and back into--

INT. BATHROOM, NEW HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

--our world.

The Old Woman smiles at Josh’s rage. She finds it amusing.

With an eerily unblinking gaze, she snuffs out the plume of flame with a single puff of breath...plunging the bathroom into darkness...

...and snuffing out Josh forever...

...and ever.

FADE OUT.